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FLASHBACK: C.I.A. DEATH SQUADS

Allan Nairn



April 1995

The U.S. government has systematic links to Guatemalan Army death squad operations that go far beyond the disclosures that have recently shaken official Washington. The news that the C.I.A. employed a Guatemalan colonel who reportedly ordered two murders has been greeted with professions of shock and outrage. But in fact the story goes much deeper, as U.S. officials well know.

North American C.l.A. operatives work inside a Guatemalan Army unit that maintains a network of torture centers and has killed thousands of Guatemalan civilians. The G-2, headquartered on the fourth floor of the Guatemalan National Palace, has, since at least the 1960s, been advised, trained, armed and equipped by U.S. undercover agents. Working out of the U.S. Embassy and living in safehouses and hotels, these agents work through an elite group of Guatemalan officers who are secretly paid by the C.I.A. and who have been implicated personally in numerous political crimes and assassinations.

This secret G-2 / C.I.A. collaboration has been described by Guatemalan and U.S. operatives and confirmed, in various aspects, by three former Guatemalan heads of state. These accounts also mesh with that given in a March 28 interview by Col. Julio Roberto Alpirez, the C.I.A.- paid Guatemalan G-2 officer who has been implicated in the murders of Guatemalan guerrilla leader Efrain Bamaca Velasquez and a U.S. citizen, Michael DeVine.

One of the American agents who works with the G-2, a thin blond man in his 40s who goes by the name of Randy Capister, has been involved in similar operations with the army of neighboring El Salvador. Another, a weapons expert known as Joe Jacarino, has operated throughout the Caribbean, and has accompanied G-2 units on missions into rural zones.

Jacarino's presence in the embassy was confirmed by David Wright, a former

embassy intelligence employee who called Jacarino a "military liaison." Col. George Hooker, the U.S. Defense Intelligence Agency chief in Guatemala from 1985 to 1989, says he also knew Jacarino, though he says Jacarino was not with the D.l.A. When asked whether Jacarino was with the C.I.A. he replied, "I'm not at liberty to say."

Celerino Castillo, a former agent for the Drug Enforcement Administration who dealt with the G-2 and the C.I.A. in Guatemala, says he worked with Capister as well as with Jacarino. He showed photographs of himself and Capister at embassy events and in the field. Guatemalan sources say Capister meets regularly with Guatemalan Army chiefs. He has been seen in meetings in Guatemala City as recently as the spring of 1994.

When I reached Colonel Alpirez at the La Aurora base in Guatemala, he denied all involvement in the deaths of Bamaca and DeVine and said he was never paid by the C.I.A. But he discussed at length how the agency advises and helps run the G-2. He praised the C.I.A. for "professionalism" and close rapport with Guatemalan officers. He said that agency operatives often come to Guatemala on temporary duty, during which they train G-2 men and provide "advice and technical assistance." He described attending C.I.A. sessions at G-2 bases on "contra-subversion" tactics and "how to manage the factors of power" to "fortify democracy." He said the C.I.A. men were on call to respond to G-2 questions, and that the G-2 often consulted the agency on how to deal with "political problems." Alpirez said he was not authorized to give specifics on the technical assistance, nor would he name the North Americans the G-2 worked with, though he said they were "very good friends."

Other officials, though, say that at least during the mid 1980s G-2 officers were paid by Jack McCavitt, then C.I.A. station chief, and that the "technical assistance" includes communications gear, computers and special firearms, as well as collaborative use of C.I.A.-owned helicopters that are flown out of the Piper hangar at the La Aurora civilian air port and from a separate U.S. air facility. Through what Amnesty International has called "a government program of political murder." the Guatemalan Army has, since 1978, killed more than 110,000 civilians. The G-2 and a smaller, affiliated unit called the Archivo have long been openly known in Guatemala as the brain of the terror state. With a contingent of more than 2,000 agents and with sub-units in the local army bases. the G-2-under orders of the army high command-coordinates the torture. assassination and disappearance of dissidents.

"If the G-2 wants to kill you, they kill you," former army Chief of staff Gen. Benedicto Lucas Garcia once said. "They send one of their trucks with a hit squad and that's it." Current and former G-2 agents describe a program of surveillance backed by a web of torture centers and clandestine body dumps. In 1986, then-army Chief of Staff Gen. Hector Gramajo Morales, a U.S. protege, said that the G-2 maintains files on and watches "anyone who is an opponent of the Guatemalan state in any realm." A former G-2 agent says that the base he worked at in Huehuetenango maintained its own crematorium and "processed" abductees by chopping off limbs, singeing flesh and administering electric shocks.

At least three of the recent G-2 chiefs have been paid by the C.I.A., according to U.S. and Guatemalan intelligence sources. One of them, Gen. Edgar Godoy Gaitan, a former army Chief of Staff, has been accused in court by the victim's family of being one of the prime "intellectual authors" of the 1990 murder of the

noted Guatemalan anthropologist Myrna Mack Chang. Another, Col. Otto Perez Molina, who now runs the Presidential General Staff and oversees the Archivo, was in charge in 1994, when, according to the Archbishop's human rights office, there was evidence of General Staff involvement in the assassination of Judge Edgar Ramiro Elias Ogaldez. The third, Gen. Francisco Ortega Menaldo, who now works in Washington as general staff director at the Pentagon-backed Inter-American Defense Board, was G-2 chief in the late 1980s during a series of assassinations of students, peasants and human rights activists. Reached at his home in Florida, Jack McCavitt said he does not talk to journalists. When asked whether Ortega Menaldo was on the C.I.A. payroll, he shouted "Enough!" and slammed down the phone.

These crimes are merely examples of a vast, systemic pattern; likewise, these men are only cogs in a large U.S. government apparatus. Colonel Hooker, the former D.I.A. chief for Guatemala, says, "It would be an embarrassing situation if you ever had a roll call of everybody in the Guatemalan Army who ever collected a C.I.A. paycheck." Hooker says the agency payroll is so large that it encompasses most of the army's top decision-makers. When I told him that his friend, Gen. Mario Enriquez Morales, the current Defense Minister, had reacted to the Alpirez scandal by saying publicly that it was "disloyal" and "shameful" for officers to take C.I.A. money, Hooker burst out laughing and exclaimed: "Good! Good answer, Mario! I'd hate to think how many guys were on that payroll. It's a perfectly normal thing."

Other top commanders paid by the C.I.A. include Gen. Roberto Matta Galvez, former army Chief of Staff, head of the Presidential General Staff and commander of massacres in the El Quiche department; and General Gramajo, Defense Minister during the armed forces' abduction, rape and torture of Dianna Ortiz, an American nun. Gramajo also managed the early 1980s highland massacres. Colonel Hooker says he once brought Gramajo on a ten-day tour of the United States to speak at U.S. military bases and confer with the U.S. Army Chief of Staff.

Three recent Guatemalan heads of state confirm that the C.I.A. works closely with the G-2. Last year, when I asked Gen. Oscar Humberto Meiia Victores (military dictator from 1983 to 1986) how the country's death squads had originated, he said they had been started "in the 1960s by the C.I.A." Gen. Efram Rios Montt (dictator from 1982 to 1983 and the current Congress President), who ordered the main highland massacres (662 villages destroyed, by the army's own count), said the C.I.A. did have agents inside the G-2. When I asked Rios Montt-a firm believer in the death penalty-if he thought he should be executed for his role in the slaughter, he leapt to his feet and shouted "Yes! Try me! Put me against the wall!" but he said he should be tried only if Americans were tried too. Specifically, he cited President Reagan, who, in the midst of the massacres, embraced Rios Montt and said he was getting "a bum rap" on human rights. Vinicio Cerezo Arevalo, civilian President from 1986 to 1991 (under whom the rate of killing actually increased), said "the C.I.A. often contracts with our military and G-2 people," and that from what he knew they "very probably" had people inside "who have participated with our G-2 in technical assistance and advice. "

These C.I.A. operations are, of course, part of the larger U.S. policy. The Bush and Clinton State Departments, for example, in the midst of a much-touted "cutoff" of military aid to Guatemala after 1990, authorized-according to classified State Department records-more than 114 separate sales of U.S. pistols and rifles.

The killing of defenseless people has been state policy in Guatemala for thirty years. The question is not whether the U.S. government has known-it is obviously aware of its own actions. It is why, with overt and covert aid, it has helped commit the army's murders.

From the The Nation magazine, April 17, 1995

Indeed, so recently as January of 2003, the United States Air Force Academy hosted a conference with a session devoted specifically to torture (http://www.usafa.af.mil/jscope/JSCOPE03/jscope03.html).
Here's an attention-getting paragraph from one of the papers (http://www.usafa.af.mil/jscope/JSCOPE03/Arrigo03.html :

"Routine participation of medical personnel in state-sponsored torture interrogation has been documented worldwide. Medical professionals determine the types of torture a person can endure, monitor the person for endurance under torture, resuscitate the person, treat the person to prepare for further torture, and administer non-therapeutic drugs. To cover up torture, physicians falsify health certificates, autopsy reports, and death certificates. Studies of survivors show medical participation in the range of 20% to 40% of cases, or even "the majority." Coercive interrogation manuals, such as the 1983 edition of the U.S. Army's School of the Americas manual, call for the services of physicians and psychiatrists."
http://72.14.203.104/search?q=cache:MBTN-jvl4iEJ:www.civilcommotion.com/2004_05_01_cc_archive.html+%22school+of+the+amer ...

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CIA Support of Death Squads

by Ralph McGehee

Posted on RemarQ, 9 October 1999

The information below is from CIABASE files on Death Squads supported by the CIA. Also given below are details on Watch Lists prepared by the CIA to facilitate the actions of Death Squads.

Angola	Bolivia	Brazil	Cambodia	Central America
Chile	Columbia	Costa Rica	Cuba	Dominican Republic
Eastern Europe	East Timor	Egypt	El Salvador	Europe
Georgia	Germany	Greece	Guatemala	Haiti
Honduras	Indonesia	Iran	Iraq	Israel
Italy	Latin America	Mexico	Nicaragua	Norway
Panama	Paraguay	Philippines	Puerto Rico	Russia
South Africa	South America	Syria	Thailand	Turkey
Uruguay	USSR	Vietnam		

Death Squads: Miscellaneous

CIA set up Ansesal and other networks of terror in El Salvador, Guatemala (Ansegat) and pre-Sandinista Nicaragua (Ansenic). The CIA created, structured and trained secret police in South Korea, Iran, Chile and Uruguay, and elsewhere — organizations responsible for untold thousands of tortures, disappearances, and deaths. Spark, 4/1985, pp. 2-4

1953-94 Sponsorship by CIA of death squad activity covered in summary form. Notes that in Haiti CIA admitted Lt. General Raoul Cedras and other high-ranking officials "were on its payroll and are helping organize violent repression in Haiti. Luis Moreno, an employee of State Department, has bragged he helped Colombian army create a database of subversives, terrorists and drug dealers." His superior in overseeing INS for Southeastern U.S., is Gunther Wagner, former Nazi soldier and a key member of now-defunct Office of Public Safety (OPS), an AID project which helped train counterinsurgents and terrorism in dozens of countries. Wagner worked in Vietnam as part of Operation Phoenix and in Nicaragua where he helped train National Guard. Article also details massacres in Indonesia. Haiti Information, 4/23/1994, pp. 3,4

CIA personnel requested transfers 1960-7 in protest of CIA officer Nestor Sanchez's working so closely with death squads. Marshall, J., Scott P.D., and Hunter, J. (1987). The Iran-Contra Connection, p. 294

CIA. 1994. Mary McGrory op-ed, "Clinton's CIA Chance." Excoriates CIA over Aldrich Ames, support for right-wing killers in El Salvador, Nicaraguan Contras and Haiti's FRAPH and Cedras. Washington Post, 10/16/1994, C1,2

Angola: Death Squads

Angola, 1988. Amnesty International reported that UNITA, backed by the U.S., engaged in extra-judicial executions of high-ranking political rivals and ill-treatment of prisoners. Washington Post, 3/14/1989, A20

Bolivia: Death Squads

Bolivia. Between October 1966-68 Amnesty International reported between 3,000 and 8,000 people killed by death squads. Blum, W. (1986). The CIA A Forgotten History, p. 264

Bolivia, 1991. A group known as "Black Hand" shot twelve people on 24 November 1991. Killings were part of group's aim to eliminate "undesirable" elements from society. Victims included police officers, prostitutes and homosexuals. Washington Post 11/25/1991, A2

Bolivia: Watch List

Bolivia, 1975. CIA hatched plot with interior ministry to harass progressive bishops, and to arrest and expel foreign priests and nuns. CIA was particularly helpful in supplying names of U.S. and other foreign missionaries. The Nation, 5/22/1976, p. 624

Bolivia, 1975. CIA provided government data on priests who progressive. Blum, W. (1986). The CIA A Forgotten History, p. 259

Brazil: Watch List

Brazil, 1962-64. Institute of Research and Social Studies (IPES) with assistance from U.S. sources published booklets and pamphlets and distributed hundreds of articles to newspapers. In 1963 alone it distributed 182,144 books. It underwrote lectures, financed students' trips to the U.S., sponsored leadership training programs for 2,600 businessmen, students, and workers, and subsidized organizations of women, students, and workers. In late 1962 IPES member Siekman in Sao Paulo organized vigilante cells to counter leftists. The vigilantes armed themselves, made hand-grenades. IPES hired retired military to exert influence on those in active service. From 1962-64 IPES, by its own estimate, spent between $200,000 and $300,000 on an intelligence net of retired military. The "research group" of retired military circulated a chart that identified communist groups and leaders. Black, J.K. (1977). United States Penetration of Brazil, p. 85

Brazil: Death Squads

Brazil, circa 1965. Death squads formed to bolster Brazil's national intelligence service and counterinsurgency efforts. Many death squad members were merely off-duty police officers. U.S. AID (and presumably the CIA) knew of and supported police participation in death squad activity. Counterspy 5/6 1979, p. 10

Brazil. Death squads began appear after 1964 coup. Langguth, A.J. (1978). Hidden Terrors, p. 121

Brazilian and Uruguayan death squads closely linked and have shared training. CIA on at least two occasions co-ordinated meetings between countries' death squads. Counterspy 5/6 1979, p. 11

Brazil, torture. After CIA-backed coup, military used death squads and torture. Blum, W. (1986). The CIA A Forgotten History, p. 190

Cambodia: Watch List

Cambodia, 1970. Aided by CIA, Cambodian secret police fed blacklists of targeted Vietnamese to Khmer Serai and Khmer Kampuchea Krom. Mass killings of Vietnamese. Valentine, D. (1990). The Phoenix Program, p. 328

Cambodia: Death Squads

Cambodia, 1980-90. U.S. indirect support for Khmer Rouge — U.S. comforting mass murderers. Washington Post, 5/7/1990, A10 editorial

Central America: Death Squads

Central America, circa 1979-87. According to Americas Watch, civilian non combatant deaths attributable to government forces in Nicaragua might reach 300, most Miskito Indians in comparison 40-50,000 Salvadoran citizens killed by death squads and government forces during same years, along with similar number during last year of Somoza and still higher numbers in Guatemala. Chomsky, N. (1988). The Culture of Terrorism, p. 101

Central America, 1981-87. Death toll under Reagan in El Salvador passed 50,000 and in Guatemala it may approach 100,000. In Nicaragua 11,000 civilians killed by 1968. Death toll in region 150,000 or more. Chomsky, N. (1988). The Culture of Terrorism, p. 29

Central America. See debate carried in Harpers "Why Are We in Central America? On Dominoes, Death Squads, and Democracy. Can We Live With Latin Revolution? The Dilemmas of National Security." Harpers, 6/1984, p35

Central America, 1982-84. Admiral Bobby Inman, former head of NSA, had deep distaste for covert operations. Inman complained that the CIA was hiring murderers to conduct operations in Central America and the Middle East — eventually Inman resigned. Toohey, B., and Pinwill, W. (1990). Oyster: the Story of the Australian Secret Intelligence Service, pp. 215-6

Chile: Watch List

Chile, 1970-73. By late 1971 the CIA in near daily contact with military. The station collecting the kind of information that would be essential for a military dictatorship after a coup: lists of civilians to be arrested, those to be protected and government installations occupied at once. Atlantic, 12/1982, p. 58

Chile, 1970-73. CIA compiled lists of persons who would have to be arrested and a roster of civilian and government installations that would need protection in case of military coup against government. Corn, D. (1994). Blond Ghost: Ted Shackley and the CIA's Crusades, p. 251

Chile, 1972-73. Drew up lists those to be arrested immediately, or protected after a coup by military. Sergeyev, F.F. (1981). Chile, CIA Big Business, p. 163

Chile late 1971-72. CIA adopted more active stance re military penetration program including effort to subsidize anti-government news pamphlet directed at armed services, compilation arrest lists and its deception operation. CIA received intelligence reports on coup planning throughout July, August and September 73. U.S. Congress, Church Committee Report. (1976) v 7, p. 39

Chile. Chilean graduates of AIFLD, as well as CIA-created unions, organized CIA-financed strikes which participated in Allende's overthrow. In 1973 AIFLD graduates provided DINA,

Chile's secret police, with thousands of names of fellow unionists who were subsequently imprisoned and tortured and executed. Counterspy 4/1981, p. 13

Chile. Blum, W. (1986). The CIA A Forgotten History, 240

Chile, 1973-74. After 1973 coup, U.S. Embassy intelligence types gave their files on the Chilean and foreign left to the junta's military intelligence service (SIM). NACLA (magazine re Latin America) 8/74, p. 28.

Chile, 1973. The military prepared lists of nearly 20,000 middle-level leaders of people's organizations, scheduled to be assassinated from the morning of the coup on. The list of some 3,000 high-level directors to be arrested. Lists detailed: name, address, age, profession, marital status, and closest personal friends. It alleged U.S. military mission and the CIA involved in their preparation. Moa 186. From late June on plotters began to finalize lists of extremists, political leaders, Marxist journalists, agents of international communism, and any and all persons participating with any vigor in neighborhood, communal, union, or national organization. The Pentagon had been asked to get the CIA to give the Chilean army lists of Chileans linked to socialist countries. Names sorted into two groups: persons not publicly known but who important in leftist organizations; and, well-known people in important positions. 20,000 in first group and 3,000 in second. Second group to be jailed, the first to be killed. Sandford, R.R. (1975). The Murder of Allende, pp. 195-6

CIA provided intelligence on "subversives" regularly compiled by CIA for use in such circumstances. Blum, W. (1986). The CIA A Forgotten History, p. 194

Columbia: Watch List

Colombia. Luis Moreno, an employee of State Department, bragged he helped Colombian army create a database of subversives, terrorists and drug dealers. Haiti Information, 4/23/94, pp. 3,4

Columbia: Death Squads

Colombia. MAS (Muerte A Secuestradores): "Death to Kidnappers," Colombian antiguerrilla death squad founded in December 1981 by members of Medellin cartel, Cali cartel, and Colombian military. Scott, P. and Marshall, J. (1991). Cocaine Politics, p. 261.

Colombia, 1993-94. Amnesty International called Colombia one of worst "killing fields." U.S. is an accomplice. William F. Schultz, human rights group's newly appointed Executive Director for the U.S., told a news conference that using fight against drugs as a pretext — Colombian government doesn't reign in [its forces]. About 20,000 people killed since 1986 in one of Latin America's most "stable democracies." only 2% political killings related to drug trafficking and 70% by paramilitary or military. U.S. probably a collaborator and much of U.S. aid for counternarcotics diverted to "killing fields." AI report said human meat is sold on black market and politicians gunned down along with children, homosexuals, and drug addicts. U.S. support because of Colombia's strategic position. No one is safe, people killed for body parts. Washington Times, 3/16/1994, p. a15

Costa Rica: Watch List

Costa Rica, 1955. Ambassador Woodward reported the government should be urged to maintain closer surveillance over communists and prosecute them more vigorously, and the government should be influenced to amend the constitution to limit the travel of communists, increase penalties for subversive activities and enact proposed legislation

eliminating communists from union leadership. Meanwhile USIA aka USIS programs "to continue to condition the public to the communist menace" should be maintained. Z Magazine, 11/1988, p. 20

Cuba: Watch List

Cuba, 1955-57. Allen Dulles pressed Batista to establish with CIA help, a bureau for the repression of communist activities. Grose, P. (1994). Gentleman Spy: the Life of Allen Dulles, p. 412

Cuba: Death Squads

Cuba, 1956-95 CIA's war against Cuba and Cuba's response. In 1956, CIA established in Cuba the infamous Bureau for the Repression of Communist Activities, BRAC — secret police that became well known for torture and assassination of Batista's political opponents. Unclassified W/1994-1995 16-17

Dominican Republic: Watch List

Dominican Republic, 1965. CIA composed list of 55 communist ringleaders of projected takeover of government. Crozier, b. (1993). Free Agent, p. 58

Dominican Republic: Death Squads

Dominican Republic, cover, 1965. 18 public safety program advisers, 6 of whom CIA. Police organized La Banda, a death squad. Lernoux, P. (1982). Cry of the People, p. 187

Eastern Europe: Watch List

East Europe, USSR, 1952-93. Radio Free Europe researchers have hundreds of thousands of file cards on prominent east bloc citizens and a staff of 160 researchers. Washington Post, 4/4/1993, p. A19

East Timor: Death Squads

East Timor, 1975-76. Role of U.S. Government, CIA/NSA, and their Australian collaborators in East Timor is another example of support for genocide which joins a long list of similar cases. Carter and Ford administrations have been accomplices in the massacre of anywhere between one-in-ten (Indonesian foreign minister Mochtar's latest figure) and one-in-two Timorese. Counterspy, Spring 1980, p. 19

Ecuador: Watch List

Ecuador, 1962. Subversive control watch list. With agent from Social Christian party CIA will form five squads composed of five men for investigative work on subversive control watch list. Agee, P. (1975). Inside the Company: CIA Diary, pp. 240, 247

Ecuador, 1963. The CIA maintained what was called the lynx list, aka the subversive control watch list. This a file that might have 50 to 500 names. People on the list were supposed to be the most important left-wing activists whose arrest we might effect through the local government. Would include place and date of birth, wife's name, where they worked, and biological data on the whole family, including schools the children attended, etc. In Ecuador the CIA paid teams to collect and maintain this type information. Agee, (1981). White Paper Whitewash, p. 55

Egypt: Watch List

Egypt, Pakistan, 1993. 4/16/1993 2 teams from CIA and FBI to Peshawar to check information given them by Egyptian intelligence services. Egyptians reported terrorist groups based in Peshawar belong to "Arab Afghans" with ties to fundamentalist Muslims in U.S. CIA specialists met with officers of Mukhabarat Al-Amat who had list of 300 Egyptians believed to be hard inner core of Jihad led by Mohammed Sahwky Islambuli. Names of various terrorists. On request by CIA and others, 100 expulsions on 4/10. Intelligence Newsletter, 4/29/1993, pp. 1,5

El Salvador: Watch List

El Salvador, 1980-89. On TV D'Aubuisson, using military intelligence files, denounced teachers, labor leaders, union organizers and politicians. Within days their mutilated bodies found. Washington had identified most leaders of death squads as members Salvadoran security forces with ties to D'Aubuisson. Washington Post op-ed by Douglas Farah, 2/23/1992, p. C4

El Salvador, 1982-84. Significant political violence associated with Salvadoran security services including National police, National Guard, and Treasury Police. U.S. Government agencies maintained official relationships with Salvadoran security establishment appearing to acquiesce in these activities. No evidence U.S. personnel participated in forcible interrogations. U.S. Did pass "tactical" information to alert services of action by insurgent forces. Information on persons passed only in highly unusual cases. Senate Intelligence Committee, October 5, 1984, pp. 11-13

El Salvador: Death Squads

El Salvador, 1961-79. Vigilante organization called Democratic National Organization (Orden) created early 1960s to further control countryside. Created in 1961 but abolished in 1979. But quickly regained and even surpassed former vicious role. Today its members form the core of civil defense corps. White, R.A. (1984). The Morass, p. 133

El Salvador, 1961-84. During the Kennedy administration, agents of the U.S. government set up two security organizations that killed thousands of peasants and suspected leftists over the next 15 years. Guided by Americans, these organizations into the paramilitary units that were the death squads: in 1984 the CIA, in violation U.S. law, continued to provide training, support, and intelligence to security forces involved in death squads. Over the years the CIA and U.S. military organized Orden, the rural paramilitary and intelligence net designed to use terror. Mano Blanco grew out of Orden, which a U.S. ambassador called the "birth of the death squads;" conceived and organized Ansesal, the elite presidential intelligence service that gathered files on Salvadoran dissidents and gave that information to the death squads; recruited General Medrano, the founder of Orden and Ansesal as a CIA agent; supplied Ansesal, the security forces, and the General Staff with electronic, photographic, and personal surveillance of individuals who later assassinated by death squads; and, trained security forces in the use of investigative techniques, weapons, explosives, and interrogation with "instruction in methods of physical and psychological torture." The Progressive, 5/1984, pp. 20-29

El Salvador, 1963. U.S. government sent 10 special forces personnel to El Salvador to help General Jose Alberto Medrano set up Organizacion Democratica Nacionalist (Orden)--first paramilitary death squad in that country. These green berets assisted in organization and indoctrination of rural "civic" squads which gathered intelligence and carried out political assassinations in coordination with Salvadoran military. Now there is compelling evidence to show that for over 30 years, members of U.S. military and CIA have helped organize, train,

and fund death squad activity in El Salvador. Covert Action Information Bulletin (Quarterly), Summer 1990, p. 51

El Salvador, 1963. National Democratic Organization (Orden) formed as pro-government organization with assistance from CIA, U.S. military advisers, AID's police training program. Orden supervised by Salvadoran national security agency, intelligence organization of military. CIA chose "right hand man," Jose Medrano, to direct Orden. Orden served as base for death squad operations and sanctioned in 1970-79 all "above ground" unions. Barry, T., and Preusch, D. (1986). AIFLD in Central America, p. 33

El Salvador, 1965-85. For a report of CIA supporting death squad activities in El Salvador see "Spark," 4/1985, pp. 2-4

El Salvador, 1966. Developed death squads with help of green berets. Campaign used vigilantes to employ terror. Later called civil defense corps. White, R.A. (1984). The Morass, pp. 101-3

El Salvador, 1968. AIFLD creates Salvadoran Communal Union (UCS) which emphasized self help for rural farmers and not peasant organizing. Initially, UCS had support military government. By 1973 UCS seen as too progressive and AIFLD officially expelled. U.S. funding UCS continued through training programs and private foundations. UCS charged with ties to Orden, organization which carried out death squad activity. With failing pro-government union efforts, AIFLD called back to control UCS in 1979. Barry, T., and Preusch, D. (1986). AIFLD in Central America, p. 34

El Salvador, 1976-85. Attended conferences of World Anti-Communist League: Roberto D'Aubuisson, El Salvador. Former major in military intelligence; charged with being responsible for coordinating nation's rightist death squads. Established Arena political party with assistance of U.S. new right leaders. Anderson, J. L.. and Anderson, S. (1986). Inside the League

El Salvador, 1979-84. House Intelligence Committee investigation of U.S. intelligence connections with death squad activities concluded U.S. intelligence agencies "have not conducted any of their activities in such a way as to directly encourage or support death squad acts." House Intelligence Committee, annual report, 1/2/1985, pp. 16-19

El Salvador, 1979-88. Death squads recruited under cover of boy scouts. Boys operated as a death squad known as Regalados Armed Forces (FAR). They murdered union officials, student leaders and teachers accused of being guerrilla sympathizers. Herman Torres, a death squad member, learned that the scouts part of nationwide net based on the paramilitary organization known as Orden and coordinated from the main military intelligence unit known as Ansesal run by D'Aubuisson. After coup of 1979, Orden and Ansesal officially disbanded. In 1982, when Arena won control of the constituent assembly, the top legislative body was turned into a center for death squads. Another death squad called the secret anti-communist army (ESA). Bush and North in 12/11/1983 were sent to make it clear U.S. would not tolerate death squads. Perez Linares boasted he killed Archbishop Romero on 3/24/1980. Catholic Church's human rights office reports 1991 death squad and government killings in first half of 1988 double the number of 1987. Mother Jones, 1/1989, pp. 10-16

El Salvador, 1980-84. Colonel Roberto Santivanez, former chief of the Salvadoran Army's special military intelligence unit, testified before U.S. Senators and Congressmen. He charged that Roberto D'Aubuisson was the principal organizer of the death squads, along with Colonel Nicolas Carranza, the head of the country's Treasury Police. He said Carranza also serves as a

paid CIA informer. Other reports said Carranza received $90,000 a year for providing intelligence to the CIA. Washington Post, 4/1/1984

El Salvador, 1980-84. Former U.S. Ambassador to El Salvador, Robert White, said the Reagan administration covered up information that Salvadoran rightist Roberto D'Aubuisson ordered the killing of Archbishop Romero. Washington Post, 2/3/1984, 2/7/1984

El Salvador, 1980. Former U.S. Ambassador Robert White, said D'Aubuisson presided over a lottery to select which Salvadoran military officer would assassinate Archbishop Romero, gunned down on 3/24/1980. White said the U.S. Embassy received an eyewitness account of the 3/22 meeting that plotted Romero's murder. Washington Post from Associated Press, 3/1984

El Salvador, 1981-83. Colonel Carranza, leader of Salvador's infamous Treasury Police, oversaw the government reign of terror in which 800 people were killed each month. Carranza received $90,000 a year from the CIA from 1979-84 Reportedly living in Kentucky. The Nation, 6/5/1988, p. 780

El Salvador, 1981-84. House Intelligence Committee concluded "CIA did not directly encourage or support death squad killings." Report added that "some intelligence relationships with individuals connected with death squads" may have given the impression that the CIA condoned, because it was aware of, some death squad killings. Washington Post, 1/14/1985, A20

El Salvador, 1981-84. Senate Intelligence Committee reported several Salvadoran security and military officials have engaged in death squads acts. Large numbers of low-level personnel also involved. Death squads have originated from the Treasury Police and the National Guard and police. Washington Post, 10/12/1984

El Salvador, 1981-84. The CIA and military advisers have helped organize, trained, financed and advised Salvadoran army and intelligence units engaged in death squad activities and torture. Information from two well-informed sources in Salvadoran government. Christian Science Monitor, 5/8/1984, p. 1

El Salvador, 1981-88. Discussion of the use of death squads in El Salvador (No indication of direct CIA participation). The Nation, 5/8/1989, p. 625

El Salvador, 1986. Despite extensive government labor clamp down (including National Guard raid of hospital workers strike), Irving Brown, known CIA and head AFL-CIO's Department of International Affairs, issues report claiming "a shift away from violent repression and an improvement in human rights." Statement incredible in light of death squad attacks on unionists. Barry, T., and Preusch, D. (1986). AIFLD in Central America, p. 35

El Salvador, 1987. Central American death squads reported operating in the Los Angeles area. NACLA (magazine re Latin America), 6/1987, pp. 4-5

El Salvador, 1988. Americas Watch in September said the military killed 52 civilians in first 6 months, compared with 72 in all of 1987. In 1988 the Salvadoran rebels have stepped up the war. Washington Post, 11/26/1988, A1&18

El Salvador. AID public safety advisors created the national police intelligence archive and helped organize Ansesal, an elite presidential intelligence service. Dossiers these agencies collected on anti-government activity, compiled with CIA surveillance reports, provided

targets for death squads. Many of 50,000 Salvadorans killed in 1981-85 Attributable to death squad activity. National Reporter, Winter 1986, p. 19

El Salvador. Covert Action Information Bulletin (Quarterly) 12:14-15;12:5-13.

El Salvador. Medrano "the father of the death squads, the chief assassin of them all," according to Jose N. Duarte. On 23 March 1985, Medrano was assassinated. Medrano in 1984 admitted he had worked for the CIA in 1960-69. The Progressive, 6/1985, p. 11

El Salvador. Administration sources said at height of rightist death squad activity, Reagan administration depended on commanders of right wing death squads. The U.S. shared some intelligence with them. U.S. intelligence officers developed close ties to chief death squad suspects while death squads killed several hundred a month and totaling tens of thousands. Washington Post, 10/6/1988, A 39 and 43

El Salvador. Article contrasting results of Senate Committee 1984 news accounts of official cooperation between CIA and Salvadoran security officers said to be involved in death squad activities. First Principles, 12/1984, pp. 2-4

El Salvador. CIA supplied surveillance information to security agencies for death squads. Blum, W. (1986). The CIA A Forgotten History, pp. 321, 327

El Salvador. Falange mysterious death squad comprising both active and retired members security forces. Conducts death squad activities. Covert Action Information Bulletin (Quarterly), 4/1981, p. 14

El Salvador. Formation of Organisation Democratica Nacionalista Orden Formed in 1968 by Medrano. Forces between 50,000 and 100,000. From 1968-79, Orden official branch of government. First junta attempted to abolish, but group reorganized as National Democratic Front. Example of Orden death squad acts. Covert Action Information Bulletin (Quarterly), 4/1981, p. 14

El Salvador. See Dickey article re slaughter in El Salvador in New Republic, 12/13/1983, entitled "The Truth Behind the Death Squads." fn Dickey, C. (1985). With the Contras, p. 286

El Salvador. The CIA and U.S. Armed forces conceived and organized Orden, the rural paramilitary and spy net designed to use terror against government opponents. Conceived and organized Ansesal, the presidential intelligence service that gathered dossiers on dissidents which then passed on to death squads. Kept key security officers with known links to death squads on the CIA payroll. Instructed Salvadoran intelligence operatives "in methods of physical and psychological torture." Briarpatch, 8/1984 p. 30 from the 5/1984 Progressive

El Salvador. UGB (Union Guerrilla Blanca) (white warriors union). Headed by D'Aubuisson, who trained at International Police Academy. D'Aubuisson claims close ties CIA. Former ambassador White called D'Aubuisson a "psychopathic killer." Covert Action Information Bulletin (Quarterly), 4/1981, p. 14

El Salvador, 1979-88. See "Confessions of an Assassin," article. Herman Torres Cortez is the assassin who was interviewed and tells of death squad operations in El Salvador. Mother Jones, 1/1989, p. 10

El Salvador, 1983. Vice President Bush delivered an ultimatum to Salvadoran military to stop death squad murders. Mother Jones, 8/1986, p. 64

El Salvador, 1987. Assassins, certainly sponsored by and probably members of Salvadoran security forces, murder Herbert Ernesto Anaya, head of Salvadoran civil rights commission and last survivor of commission's eight founders. Prior harassment of Anaya solicited neither protest nor protection from Duarte or U.S. administration. Contrary to popular opinion, death squad activity has not waned. "Selective killings of community leaders, labor organizers, human rights workers, rural activists and others have replaced wholesale massacres" since signing of Arias plan. Los Angeles organization "El Rescate" has compiled chronology of human rights abuses. The Nation, 11/14/1987, p. 546

El Salvador. CIA took more than two years 1980-83 begin seriously analyzing papers captured from D'Aubuisson. ICC 242. Papers said reveal death squad supporters, atrocities. Marshall, J., Scott P.D., and Hunter, J. (1987). The Iran-Contra Connection, p. 22

El Salvador, 1988. Death squad activity surged in El Salvador in 1988 after a period of relative decline. Amnesty International report "El Salvador: Death Squads- A Government Strategy," noted in NACLA (magazine re Latin America) 3/1989, p. 11

El Salvador, 1989. Although human rights monitors consistently link death squad acts to the Salvadoran government, many U.S. media report on death squads as if they an independent or uncontrollable force. Extra, Summer, 1989, p. 28

El Salvador, 1989 Member of Salvadoran army said first brigade intelligence unit army troops routinely kill and torture suspected leftists. First brigade day-to-day army operations carried out with knowledge of U.S. military advisers. CIA routinely pays expenses for intelligence operations in the brigades. U.S. has about 55 advisers in Salvador. Washington Post, 10/27/1989, A1,26

El Salvador, circa 1982-84. Ricardo Castro, a 35 year old Salvadoran army officer, a West Point graduate, said he worked for the CIA and served as translator for a U.S. official who advised the military on torture techniques and overseas assassinations. Castro personally led death squad operations. The Progressive, 3/1986, pp. 26-30

El Salvador, domestic, 1986-87. Article "The Death Squads Hit Home." For decades they terrorized civilians in El Salvador, now they are terrorizing civilians in the U.S. The FBI shared intelligence about Salvadoran activists in the U.S. with Salvador's notorious security services. The Progressive, 10/1987, pp. 15-19

El Salvador. Office of Public Safety graduate Colonel Roberto Mauricio Staben was, according to journalist Charles Dickey "responsible for patrolling — if not contributing to — the famous death squad dumping ground at El Payton a few miles from its headquarters." also, Alberto Medrano, founder of El Salvador's counterinsurgency force Orden, was an operations graduate. Finally, Jose Castillo, who was trained in 1969 at the U.S. International Police School, later became head of National Guard's section of special investigations which helped organize the death squads. The Nation, 6/7/1986, p. 793

El Salvador. Former death squad member Joya Martinez admitted death squad operations carried out with knowledge and approval 2 U.S. military advisers. LA Weekly, 1/25/1990

El Salvador. DCI report to House Intelligence Committee re CIA connections with death squads. National security archives listing.

El Salvador. FBI's contacts with the Salvadoran National Guard. Information in Senate Intelligence Committee Report, 7/1989, pp. 104-5

El Salvador. Former San Francisco police officer accused of illegal spying said he worked for CIA and will expose CIA's support of death squads if he prosecuted. Tom Gerard said he began working for CIA in 1982 and quit in 1985 because he could not tolerate what he saw. He and Roy Bullock are suspected of gathering information from police and government files on thousands of individuals and groups. Information probably ended up with B'nai B'rith and ADL. CIA refused to confirm Gerard's claim. Gerard said there is proof CIA directly involved in training and support of torture and death squads in El Salvador, Honduras, and Guatemala during mid 1980s. Proof in his briefcase San Francisco police seized. Gerard said several photos seized by police show CIA agents attending interrogations, or posing with death squad members. Washington Times, 4/28/1993, A 6

El Salvador, 1963-90. In 1963 U.S. sent 10 Special Forces to help General Madrano set up Organizacion Democratica Nacionalista (Orden), a death squad. Evidence this sort activity going on for 30 years. Martinez, a soldier in First infantry brigade's department 2, admitted death squad acts. Said he worked with two U.S. Advisers. Castro, another soldier, talks about death squads and U.S. contacts. Rene Hurtado, former agent with Treasury Police, gives his story. Covert Action Information Bulletin (Quarterly) Summer 1990, pp. 51-53

El Salvador, 1973-89. El Salvador's ruling party, Arena, closed off fifth floor of National Assembly building to serve as HQ for national network of death squads following Arena's 20 March 1988 electoral victory. Hernan Torres Cortez, a former Arena security guard and death squad member, said he was trained and recruited by Dr. Antonio Regalado under orders of Roberto D'Abuisson intelligence service, Ansesal, in 1973. Official network was broken up in 1984 following Vice President Bush's visit, but was reinstated in 1988. Intelligence Newsletter, 1/18/1991, p. 5

El Salvador, 1979-90. A detailed discussion of Salvador's death squads. Schwarz, B. (1991). American Counterinsurgency Doctrine and El Salvador, pp. 41-3

El Salvador, 1980-84. Expatriate Salvadorans in U.S. have provided funds for political violence and have been directly involved in assisting and directing their operations. Senate Intelligence Committee, October 5, 1984, p. 15

El Salvador, 1980-84. Numerous Salvadoran officials involved in death squad activities — most done by security services — especially the Treasury Police and National Guard. Some military death squad activity. Senate Intelligence Committee, October 5, 1984, 15

El Salvador, 1980-89. D'Aubuisson kept U.S. on its guard. Hundreds of released declassified documents re relationship. Washington Post, 1/4/1994, A1,13

El Salvador, 1980-89. Declassified documents re 32 cases investigated by United Nations appointed Truth Commission on El Salvador reveal U.S. officials were fully aware of Salvadoran military and political leaders' complicity in crimes ranging from massacre of more than 700 peasants at El Mozote in 1981 to murder of 6 Jesuit priests in 1989, and thousands of atrocities in between. Lies of our Time 3/1994, pp. 6-9

El Salvador, 1980-89. President Reagan and Vice President Bush instituted polices re fighting communists rather than human rights concerns. From 11/1980 through 1/1991 a large number of assassinations — 11/27, 5 respected politicians; 12/4, rape and murder of 3 American nuns and a lay workers; 2 American land reform advisers on 1/4/1981. Archbishop Romero killed 3/1980. There clear evidence D'Aubuisson's involvement but Reagan administration ignored. On TV, D'Aubuisson, using military intelligence files, denounced teachers, labor leaders, union organizers and politicians. Within days their mutilated bodies found. Washington had identified most leaders of death squads as members Salvadoran security forces with ties to D'Aubuisson. With U.S. outrage at bloodshed, U.S., via Bush,

advised government slaughter must stop. Article discusses torture techniques used by security forces. Washington Post op-ed by Douglas Farah, 2/23/1992, C4

El Salvador, 1980-90. COL Nicolas Carranza, head of Treasury Police, on CIA payroll. Minnick, W. (1992). Spies and Provocateurs, p. 32

El Salvador, 1980-90. State panel found that mistakes by U.S. diplomats, particularly in probing 1981 massacre of civilians at El Mozote, undercut policy during Salvador's civil war. Findings in 67-page study ordered by Secretary of State Christopher. Sen. Leahy said report "glosses over...the lies, half-truths and evasions that we came to expect from the State Department during that period." Sen. Dodd said "report is sloppy, anemic and basically a whitewash..." Washington Times, 7/16/1993, A12 and Washington Post, 7/16/1993, A16

El Salvador, 1980-91. Truth Commission report says 19 of 27 Salvadoran officers implicated in 6 Jesuit murders were graduates of U.S. Army's School of Americas in Fort Benning, Ga. Almost three quarters of Salvadoran officers accused in 7 other massacres were trained at Fort Benning. It called school for dictators. Since 46 it has trained more than 56,000 Latin soldiers. Graduates include some of region's most despicable military strongmen. Now, when U.S. wants to build democracy, school an obstacle. Newsweek investigation turned up hundreds of less than honorable grads. At least 6 Peruvian officers linked to a military death squad that killed 9 students and a professor were graduates. Four of five senior Honduran officers accused in Americas Watch report of organizing a death squad, Battalion 316, were trained there. A coalition charged 246 Colombian officers with human rights violations; 105 were school alumni. Honored graduates include General Suarez, a brutal dictator of Bolivia; General Callejas Ycallejas, chief of Guatemalan intelligence in late 1970s and early 1980s, when thousands political opponents were assassinated; and Honduran General Garcia, a corrupt person; and, Hernandez, armed forces chief of Colombia suspected of aiding Colombian drug traffickers. Newsweek, 8/9/1993, pp. 36-7

El Salvador, 1980-92. "Secret of the Skeletons: Uncovering America's Hidden Role in El Salvador." Pathologists uncovered 38 small skeletons in El Mozote. In 1981 soldiers of ACRE, immediate reaction infantry battalion created by U.S., herded children into basement and blew up building. U.S. officials denied any massacre had taken place and kept on denying for years. About 800 residents killed. Armed service leaders said they conducted war on part of Reagan and Bush administrations with bi-partisan support Congress since 1984; received daily assistance from State Department, DOD and CIA. Truth Commission investigating via U.S. Government interagency committee. State and CIA not cooperating with commission. CIA not giving one document on formation of death squads, prepared in 1983 for congressional intelligence committees. Kidnap-for-profit ring against Salvadoran business community. With U.S. Encouragement, Salvadoran government arrested several members of ring. One was a death squad assassin, Rudolfo Isidro Lopez Sibrian, who implicated in deaths of 2 American labor advisers. Washington Post, 11/15/1992, C1,2

El Salvador, 1980-93. 11/5/1993 release of thousands pages of intelligence reports shows every U.S. diplomat, military officer, and intelligence operative who worked with El Salvador's military and political leaders in 1980s knew most of those involved in organizing death squads. State Department officials lied to Congress. Intelligence reports detailed precise information on murder, kidnapping, and coup plots, and death squad funding, involving people like VP Francisco Merino and current Arena candidate Armando Calderon Sol. At least 63,000 Salvadoran civilians — equivalent of 3 million Americans were killed — most by government supported by U.S. The Nation, 11/29/1993, p. 645

El Salvador, 1980-93. Approximately 50-page article on the massacres at El Mozote. Article by Mark Danner. New Yorker, 12/6/1993

El Salvador, 1980-93. Article by Jared Toller, "Death Squads Past, Present & Future." discusses recent cases of FMLN members being murdered by resurgent death squads. Only left is calling for full implementation of UN Truth Commission's recommendations — purging armed forces, full investigation into death squads, etc. Truth Commission had recommended U.S. make it files available. U.S. Had refused to turn over 1983 FBI report on death squads organization in Miami. Salvadoran government is the death squads. Member of a death squad now imprisoned and seeking amnesty, Lopez Sibrian, explained participation of Arena luminaries in kidnappings, bombings and attacks on National University. He implicated the mayor of San Salvador in various acts. Link between phone service, Antel, and national intelligence police. Antel records calls of left and passes them to police. (The secret anti-communist Army, a former death squad, were regulars of now-disbanded Treasury Police). Upcoming elections may have generated increase in death squad activity. Z magazine, 1/1994, pp. 14-5

El Salvador, 1980-93. Colman McCarthy comments of UN's Truth Commission report and the Reagan-Abrams "fabulous achievement." Washington Post, 4/6/1993, D22

El Salvador, 1980-93. Letter to editor by Thomas Buergenthal of law school at George Washington U., who was a member of the Truth Commission for El Salvador. He denies news story that there was a chapter in the report that dealt with the structure and finances of the groups was withheld. He bemoans the ability of the commission to thoroughly investigate all aspects. Washington Post, 11/30/1993, A24

El Salvador, 1980-93. Report of UN's Truth Commission re enormous crime of a government that killed upwards of 70,000 civilians between 1980-92. Report refutes official statements made by Reagan and Bush administrations — when officials denied leaders of Salvadoran armed forces were using execution, rape and torture to sustain their power — reports says they were. We need a truth report on our own government per Rep. Moakley. Truth report adds growing body evidence U.S. Government officials may have participated in perpetuation of atrocities in El Salvador. In 1960s, CIA advisers helped create a nationwide informant net. In 1981, team of military advisers led by Brig. Gen. Frederick Woener sent to determine "rightist terrorism and institutional violence." Salvadorans generally dismissed notion that terror was a bad idea. One of Colonels, Oscar Edgardo Casanova Vejar, was one covering up rape and murder of four churchwomen. Woener recommended U.S. proceed and give $300-400 million aid. U.S. officials claimed churchwomen had run a roadblock and there was no massacre at El Mozote. Neil Livingstone, a consultant who worked with Oliver North at NSC concluded, "death squads are an extremely effective tool, however odious, in combating terrorism and revolutionary challenges." op-ed by Jefferson Morley, an Outlook editor. Washington Post, 3/28/1993, C1,5

El Salvador, 1980-93. Salvador's ruling party moved to declare amnesty for those named in United Nations.-sponsored Truth Commission. Investigators said 85% of complaints laid to government death squads. Discusses D'Aubuisson's implication in Archbishop Romero's assassination. Washington Post 3/17/1993 a25

El Salvador, 1980. Ten former death squad members were ordered killed in Santiago de Maria on 27 December 1980 by Hector Antonio Regalado, who felt they knew too much. Intelligence Newsletter, 10/4/1988, p. 6

El Salvador, 1981-84. There are two versions of first page of a CIA report, "El Salvador: Dealing With Death Squads," 1/20/1984. CIA released first version in 1987, among congressional debate over aid to El Salvador. Second version, which contradicts first, declassified by CIA in 11/1993. As recently as 10/1992, CIA continued to release censored version in response to FOIA requests. Redacted version implies death squad problem overcome — non censored version show this is not true. New York Times, 12/17/1993, A19

El Salvador, 1981-89. Salvadoran atrocity posed agonizing choice for U.S. COL Rene Ponce, chief of staff of Salvador's armed forces, has been accused of ordering murder of six Jesuit priests, their housekeeper and her daughter at Central American University. Newly available U.S. documents show U.S. knowingly and repeatedly aligned themselves with unsavory characters during 1980s while defending them to U.S. Public. Diplomatic cables found among more than 10,000 recently declassified State, Pentagon and CIA documents, reveal extent U.S. policy makers chose to overlook Ponce's brutality. U.S. officials long labeled Ponce a right-wing extremist tied to death squads. But documents make clear U.S. played down unsavory side of Ponce. Details from correspondence between Ambassador Walker and Baker. In 10/1983, CIA prepared a "briefing paper on right-wing terrorism in El Salvador" that described Ponce as a supporter of death squads. Impact Bush's visit in 1984 to push for human rights was minimal. By 7/1989, CIA reported that Ponce "espouses moderate political views." Ponce refused repeated requests to pursue those responsible for deaths of Jesuits. Washington Post, 4/5/1994, A13

El Salvador, 1981-90. Government operation at El Mozote consisted of Army, National Guard and the Treasury Police in operation rescue. By early 1992, U.S. spent more than 4 billion in civil war lasting 12 years and that left 75,000 dead. New Yorker, 12/6/1993, p. 53

El Salvador, 1981-90. In 1981 over 10,000 political murders committed by Salvadoran military and its death squads. In 1990 there were 108 such murders. Schwarz, B. (1991). American Counterinsurgency Doctrine and El Salvador, p. 23

El Salvador, 1981-92. Article "Death-Squad Refugees," discusses case of Cesar Vielman Joya Martinez, extradited by Bush to El Salvador to face murder charges for being part of a death squad that he claims operated with knowledge of defense minister Ponce and other top officials. FOIA documents show U.S. helping prepare extradition request for Salvadoran government. Truth Commission's report vindicates Joya. Texas Observer (magazine), 3/26/1993, pp. 9-10

El Salvador, 1981-92. Some U.S. special operations soldiers in El Salvador during civil war want Pentagon to admit they more than advisers. They say they also fought. Army memo given Newsweek says, "most personnel serving in an advisory capacity were directly engaged in hostile action." Newsweek, 4/5/1993

El Salvador, 1981-92. Truth Commission report implicates top Salvadoran officials in ordering or covering up murders of four U.S. churchwomen and six Jesuit priests; and Salvadoran troops massacred many hundreds at El Mozote. Four Dutch journalists killed 3/17/1982 were deliberately ambushed by Salvadoran army. Denials by then top U.S. government officials now exposed. U.S. government supported war with $6 billion. The Nation, 4/12/1993, p. 475

El Salvador, 1981-93. 12 years of tortured truth on El Salvador — U.S. declarations undercut by United Nations. Commission report. For 12 years, opponents of U.S. policy in Central America accused Reagan and Bush administrations of ignoring widespread human rights abuses by the Salvadoran government and of systematically deceiving or even lying to Congress and people about the nature of an ally that would receive $6 billion in economic and military aid. A three-man United Nations.-sponsored Truth Commission released a long-awaited report on 12 years of murder, torture and disappearance in El Salvador's civil war. Commission examined 22,000 complaints of atrocities and attributed 85 percent of a representative group of them to Salvadoran security forces or right-wing death squads. It blamed remainder on guerrilla Farabundo Marti National Liberation front (FMLN). In May 1980, for instance, when Carter was still President, security forces seized documents implicating rightist leader D'Aubuisson in the murder of Archbishop Oscar Romero. In Fall of 1981, Army Brig. Gen. Fred Woerner supervised preparation of a joint U.S.-Salvadoran

internal military "Report of the El Salvador Military Strategy Assistance Team," which noted that "the (Salvadoran) armed forces are reluctant to implement vigorous corrective actions for abuses in the use of force." One reason so many people found it hard to believe U.S. officials could not have known more about rights abuses and acted more aggressively to curb them is that the U.S. was deeply involved in running the war, from intelligence gathering to strategy planning to training of everyone from officers to foot soldiers. By 1982, U.S.. military advisers were assigned to each of the six Salvadoran brigades, as well as each of 10 smaller detachments. The U.S. put tens of millions of dollars into developing the ultra-modern national intelligence directorate to coordinate intelligence gathering and dissemination. U.S. military and CIA officials participated in almost every important meeting. Most brigades had a U.S. intelligence officer assigned to them, as well as a U.S. liaison officer. U.S. advisers regularly doled out small amounts of money, usually less than $1,000 at a time, for intelligence work. The U.S. was not informed of arrests or captures Unless they specifically asked. "They never asked unless there was a specific request because someone in Washington was getting telegrams." El Mozote, the report said, was work of U.S.-trained Atlacatl battalion, part of a days-long search-and-destroy sweep known as "Operation Rescue." In fact, the report said, the soldiers massacred more than 500 people in six villages. In El Mozote, where the identified victims exceeded 200, "the men were tortured and executed, then women were executed and finally, the children" Washington Post, 3/21/1993

El Salvador, 1981-93. A discussion of the media's treatment of the El Mozote massacres and the U.S. media's treatment of that story. Lies of our Time, 6/1993, pp. 3-4

El Salvador, 1981-93. Thomas Enders, former Assistant Secretary of State for Inter-American Affairs from 1981-83, writes op-ed defending U.S. officials' testimony re massacre at El Mozote as now confirmed by UN's Truth Commission report. Washington Post, op-ed 3/29/1993, A19

El Salvador, 1981-93. United Nations. Commission on Truth to release report on crimes committed against civilians in Salvador's 12-year civil war. Defense Minister Ponce already resigned. Washington Post Outlook, 3/14/1993, C1,2

El Salvador, 1981-94. Armando Calderon Sol considered shoo-in to win Presidency in impending elections. Calderon began his political career as a member of a seven-man, neo-fascist group under D'Aubuisson's guidance that supported death squad operations. Calderon has all worst elements of D'Abuisson without any redeeming qualities. When D'Abuisson running death squads out of his office, Calderon was his private secretary and a loyal soldier in a terrorist cell — Salvadoran National Movement (MNS). In 1981, D'Abuisson unified MNS into Arena party. Washington Post, Outlook, 4/17/1994, C1,3

El Salvador, 1981. Detailed article on "The Truth of El Mozote," by Mark Danner. New Yorker, 12/6/1993, pages 51 and ending on page 103

El Salvador, 1981. Skeletons verify killing of Salvadoran children of El Mozote, El Salvador. Washington Times, 10/21/1992, A9 and Washington Post, 10/22/1992, A18

El Salvador, 1982-84. Significant political violence associated with Salvadoran security services including National police, National Guard, and Treasury Police. U.S. government agencies maintained official relationships with Salvadoran security establishment appearing to acquiesce in these activities. No evidence U.S. personnel participated in forcible interrogations. U.S. did pass "tactical" information to alert services of action by insurgent forces. Information on persons passed only in highly unusual cases. Senate Intelligence Committee, October 5, 1984, pp. 11-13.

El Salvador, 1982-84. "Recent Political Violence in El Salvador," Report of Senate Intelligence Committee. Committee found ample evidence that U.S. policy was to oppose political violence. U.S. government accorded high priority to gathering intelligence on political violence. President Bush and his demarche in 1983. P8. U.S. government Relationship with Robert D'Aubuisson — bio on him. U.S. Government contact with him limited. Roberto Santivanez, director of Ansesal 1978-79. He claimed he himself had engaged in death squad activity and had a relationship with U.S. through CIA and that COL Carranza had ties to CIA. Colonel Nicolas Carranza had extensive ties to Arena and National Conciliation (PCN) parties. He involved in various activities of interest to U.S. in various positions. Senate Intelligence Committee, October 5, 1984, pp. 1-11

El Salvador, 1983-90. Former Salvadoran army intelligence agent who applied for political asylum in U.S. convicted in court of entering country illegally. Joya-Martinez's request for political asylum still pending. Washington Post, 9/19/1990, A5

El Salvador, 1985. In 2/1985, CIA reported that behind Arena's legitimate exterior lies a terrorist network led by D'Aubuisson using both active-duty and retired military personnel..." main death squad was "the Secret Anti-communist Army," described by CIA as the paramilitary organization of Arena — from the National Police and other security organizations. These were funded directly from Washington. Death squads became more active as 1994, election approached. Columbia, possibly leading terrorist state in Latin America, has become leading recipient of U.S. military aid. Since 1986, more than 20,000 people have been killed for political reasons, most by Colombian authorities. More than 1,500 leaders, members and supporters of the Labor Party (UP) have been assassinated since party established in 1985. Pretext for terror operations is war against guerrillas and narcotraffickers. Former a partial truth, latter a myth concocted to replace the "communist threat." Works hand-in-hand with drug lords, organized crime, and landlords. National Police took over as leading official killers while U.S. aid shifted to them. Targets include community leaders, human rights and health workers, union activists, students, members of religious youth organizations, and young people in shanty towns. Sale of human organs. Case of Guatemala. Shift of 1962, under Kennedy administration from hemispheric defense to "internal security:" war against the internal enemy. Doctrines expounded in counterinsurgency manuals. Internal enemy extends to labor organizations, popular movements, indigenous organizations, opposition political parties, peasant movements, intellectual sectors, religious currents, youth and student groups, neighborhood organizations, etc. From 1984 through 1992, 6,844 Colombian soldiers trained under U.S. International Military Education and Training Program (MET). Z Magazine, 5/1994, 14 pages

El Salvador, 1986-87. See article "Death Squad Update, Investigating L.A.'s Salvadoran Connection." Los Angeles Weekly, 8/7/1987

El Salvador, 1986-89. Joya Martinez, former death squad member, who said two U.S. advisers attached to his unit and gave funds of 9500 month. Article names other Salvadoran death squad members. Unclassified, 7/1990

El Salvador, 1986. In 1986, Salvadoran authorities, with help of FBI, cracked a kidnap-for-hire ring in which death squads posing as leftist rebels kidnapped some of nation's wealthiest businessmen. Schwarz, B. (1991). American Counterinsurgency Doctrine and El Salvador, p. 28

El Salvador, 1987-89. Jesuit labeled ardent communist two years before by Salvadoran, U.S. officials. Religious News Service, 5/9/1990, p. 1

El Salvador, 1987-89. Salvadoran woman defecting to U.S. said she worked for death squad and provided information on six people who killed. Her claims back up those of her

supervisor, Cesar Joya Martinez, who linked death squad acts to U.S. funding. Boston Globe, 3/16/1990, in First Principles, 4/1990, p. 10

El Salvador, 1988-89. Joya Martinez, former member intelligence department 1st army Brigade of Salvador's army. Said U.S. advisers funded their activity, but unaware of death squad. Washington Post, 11/19/1989, F2

El Salvador, 1988. Amnesty International report of 26 October 1988 noted "black list" are supplied to Salvadoran media by Salvadoran intelligence services. During first six months of 1988, number of murders by death squads tripled over same period of previous year. Most prominent victim was Judge Jorge Alberto Serrano Panameno who was shot in May 1988. Increase reflects rise to power of 1966 class from national military school. Class members include Colonel Rene Emilio Ponce, new chief of staff of armed forces as well as director of Treasury Police. They command five of country's six brigades, five of seven military detachments, three security forces as well as intelligence, personnel and operations posts in high command. Intelligence Newsletter, 11/16/1988, pp. 5,6

El Salvador, 1989-91. According to confidential Salvadoran military sources, decision to murder six Jesuit priests was made at a 15 November 1989 meeting of senior commanders (CO) at the Salvadoran military school. Those allegedly present were: Colonel Benavides, CO of the school; General Juan Rafael Bustillo, then CO of Salvadoran Air Force — in 1991 assigned to embassy in Israel; General Emilio Ponce, then chief of staff — in 1991 minister of defense; and Colonel Elena Fuentes, CO of 1st brigade. Initiative for murders came from Colonel Bustillo. For a listing of direct and circumstantial evidence supporting allegation, see statement of Rep. Joe Moakley, Task Force on El Salvador, 11/18/1991

El Salvador, 1989. CIA officer visited bodies of dead priests. Officer was senior liaison with (DNI) the national intelligence directorate. U.S. probably knew Salvadoran military behind assassinations but did not say anything for seven weeks. State Department panel did not review actions of CIA or DOD. Washington Post, 7/18/1993, C1,4

El Salvador, 1989. Congressman criticized a 11/ 1987 report in which Latin American and U.S. military leaders accused Rev. Ignacio Ellacuria and several other theologians of supporting objectives of communist revolution. Father Ellacuria, Rector of Jesuit university in San Salvador, was murdered on 11/16/ 1989. Religious News Service, 5/11/1990, p. 1

El Salvador, 1989. Joya Martinez and Jesuit murders. Martinez says his unit which played major role in 12/1989 murder of Jesuit priests had U.S. government advisors. INS trying to deport Martinez. Unclassified, 9/1990, p. 6

El Salvador, 1989. Salvadoran Archbishop Rivera accused U.S. officials of subjecting a witness to the slaying of 6 Jesuit intellectuals to brainwashing and psychological torment. Washington Post, 12/11/1989, A23,24

El Salvador, 1989. U.S. military adviser Benavides told FBI, later recanted, that Salvadoran army chief of staff and others knew of plan to kill six Jesuit priests. Washington Post, 10/29/1990, A17,21

El Salvador, 1990. Amnesty International reported a significant surge in number of killings by army-supported death squads this year. 45 people killed between January and August this year, compared with 40 reported in 1989. Washington Post, 10/24/1990, A14

El Salvador, 1990. Cesar Vielman Joya-Martinez, former member Salvadoran First brigade death squad, sentenced to 6 months in jail for illegally reentering U.S. 6 years after he deported. Washington Post, 12/8/1990, A22

El Salvador, 1991. Salvadoran minister of defense and other top generals attended 1989 meeting where decision was made to murder six Jesuit priests, according to confidential sources. Allegation was made by an attorney working for Rep. Moakley (D-MA), whose task force released a six page statement directly linking Salvadoran high command to slayings. Washington Times, 11/18/1991, A2

El Salvador, 1991. Summary executions continued in El Salvador despite the presence of Onusal, the UN observer mission monitoring human rights violations. In a 1991 report, Onusal noted government made few attempts to investigate slayings. Report also accused FMLN for recruiting fifteen-year-olds. Washington Times, 12/3/1991, A8

El Salvador, 1992. Cesar Vielman Joya Martinez, former Salvadoran death squad member, to be deported. Washington Post editorial, 10/23/1992, A20

El Salvador, 1993. Right-wing death squads undermining fragile peace per UN chief in campaign for March 1994 elections. Washington Times, 11/25/1993, A15

El Salvador, Central America, 1981-1993. Salvadoran death squads set up as a consequence of Kennedy administration decisions. Killers were Treasury Police and the military who were trained in intelligence and torture by U.S. U.S. personnel staffed military and intelligence apparatus. Generals selected and trained by U.S. were most notorious killers. 1984 FBI report on death squads never released. For savage expose of School of Americas' killers, see Father Roy Bourgeois's School of the Americas Watch, Box 3330, Columbus Ga. 31903; (706) 682-5369. The Nation, 12/27/1993, p. 791

El Salvador, 1989-1990. Joya Martinez testified role played by U.S. officials in death squad killings carried out by U.S. trained first infantry Brigade's intelligence unit. Two U.S. military advisers controlled intelligence department and paid for unit's operating expenses. His unit performed 74 executions between April and July 1989. Washington Post confirmed U.S. advisers work in liaison with First brigade and CIA pays expenses for intelligence operations in the brigades. Martinez said his first brigade unit attached to U.S.-trained Atlacatl battalion, which slaughtered the Jesuit priests. Member of his unit, Oscar Mariano Amaya Grimaldi has confessed to slayings. In These Times, 8/14/1990, p. 17

Europe: Watch List

Europe, 1945-92. Operation Gladio. First scandal was discovery of assassination teams in 1952 linked to Bundes Deutscher Jugend — a right-wing political organization in Hesse, Germany. They prepared list of German politicians who [might cooperate with Soviets]. BBC (1992). Gladio — Timewatch (Transcript of 3 part program), pp. 19-20

Georgia: Watch List

Georgia, 1993. Woodruff worked for 2 months as CIA's Tbilisi station chief posing as a State Department regional-affairs officer. He to help Guguladze upgrade Georgian intelligence service and to monitor factional struggle. Newsweek 8/23/1993, p. 18

Germany: Watch List

Germany, 1950-54. In about 1950 pacifist ideas to be eradicated. U.S. formed German youth league (Bund Deutscher Jugend (BDJ)) in Frankfurt. Psychological indoctrination given by Paul Luth. BDJ was a militant organization, a counterweight to communist-run free German youth (FDJ) run from East Berlin to infiltrate W. German youth. BDJ passed letters and brochures through Iron Curtain and pasted slogans on walls. Chancellor Adenauer wanted cold war and wanted to use the BDJ. Otto John told by State official Zinn that it had uncovered neo-Nazi unit BDJ run by Peters, that was organizing secret firing exercises and training for partisan warfare in the Odelwald. BDJ had drawn up a blacklist of left-wing socialists who were to be arrested or even murdered in event of attack from east. [early version of Gladio political and staybehind operation]. John, O. (1969). Twice Through the Lines: the Autobiography of Otto John, pp. 210-15

Germany, 1950-90. Bonn officials said government to disband secret resistance net Operation Gladio. Section consisted of former Nazi SS and Waffen-SS officers as well as members of an extreme right-wing youth group that drew up plans to assassinate leading members of Socialist Democratic Party in event of USSR-invasion. "Statewatch" compilation filed June 1994, p. 11

Germany, 1952-91. CIA's stay-behind program caused scandal in 1952 when West German police discovered CIA working with a 2,000-member fascist youth group led by former Nazis. Group had a black list of people to be liquidated in case of conflict with the USSR. Lembke case. The Nation, 4/6/1992, p. 446

Germany, 1953. (Stay-behind operation Gladio?). In 1953 mass arrests of neo-Nazi militant organization within ranks of German youth fellowship (BDJ) discovered. Group held secret night maneuvers in Odenwald with CIA instructors. They preparing for war with East Germany and prepared lists of communists, left-wing sympathizers and pacifists who were to be arrested in case of emergency. Members encouraged to infiltrate East German youth league (FDJ). Operation exposed in press and scores of youths arrested in East Germany as spies, propagandists or provocateurs, and sentenced to terms of up to nine years of hard labor. Hagan, l. (1969). The Secret War for Europe, p. 78

Germany, 1953. U.S. Intelligence officer told Otto John, head of BFV, one of its agents in East Germany to defect with a list of East German agents in West. 35 Communist spies arrested after Easter. Later it found many of those arrested were innocent. Arrests followed with apologies. Disaster caused by over-zealous U.S. intelligence officer. West German businessmen as consequence afraid to do business with east. This a goal of U.S. Policy — was this a deliberate "mistake?" Hagan, l. (1969). The Secret War for Europe, p. 81

Greece: Watch List

Greece, 1967. After CIA-backed coup, the army and police seized almost 10,000 prisoners, mostly left-wing militants, though political leaders of all shades taken including prime minister Kanelopoulos and members of his Cabinet, trade union members, journalists, writers, etc. The lists had been provided by the sympathizers in the police and the secret service. Final lists kept up to date by COL George Ladas. Details of fate of the arrestees. Tompkins, P. (Unpublished manuscript). Strategy of Terror, pp. 13-8

Guatemala: Watch List

Guatemala, 1954. Death squads and target lists. Schlesinger, S., & Kinzer, S. (1983). Bitter Fruit 197, pp. 207-8, 221

Guatemala, 1954. Goal of CIA was apprehension of suspected communists and sympathizers. At CIA behest, Castillo Armas created committee and issued decree that established death penalty for crimes including labor union activities. Committee given authority declare anyone communist with no right of defense or appeal. By 11/21/1954 committee had some 72,000 persons on file and aiming to list 200,000. Schlesinger, S., & Kinzer, S. (1983). Bitter Fruit, p. 221

Guatemala, 1954. The U.S. Ambassador, after overthrow of Arbenz government, gave lists of radical opponents to be eliminated to Armas's government. NACLA 2/1983, p 4. The military continued up to at least 1979 to use a list of 72,000 proscribed opponents, drawn up first in 1954. NACLA (magazine re Latin America) 2/1983, p. 13

Guatemala, 1954. After Armas made president, labor code forgotten and worker organizers began disappearing from united fruit plantations. Hersh, B. (1992). The Old Boys, p. 353

Guatemala, 1954. Department of State Secretary Dulles told Ambassador Peurifoy to have the government scour the countryside for communists and to slap them with criminal charges. A few months later the government began to persecute hundreds for vague communist crimes. The Nation, 10/28/1978, p. 444

Guatemala, 1954 U.S. Ambassador Peurifoy, after Arbenz resigned, gave Guatemalan army's chief of staff a list of "communists" to be shot. The chief of staff declined. The Nation 6/5/1995, pp. 792-5

Guatemala, 1981-89. Israeli Knesset member General Peled said in Central America Israel is 'dirty work' contractor for U.S. Helped Guatemala regime when Congress blocked Reagan administration. Israeli firm Tadiran (then partly U.S.-owned) supplied Guatemalan military with computerized intelligence system to track potential subversives. Those on computer list had an excellent chance of being "disappeared." It was "an archive and computer file on journalists, students, leaders, leftists, politicians and so on." Computer system making up death lists. Cockburn, A. & Cockburn, L. (1991). Dangerous Liaison, p. 219

Guatemala, 1985-93. CIA collected intelligence re ties between Guatemalan insurgents and Cuba. CIA passed the information to U.S. military, which was assisting Guatemalan army extinguish opposition. Washington Post, 3/30/1995, A1,10

Guatemala, 1988-91. CIA station chief in Guatemala from 1988 to 1991 was a Cuban American. He had about 20 officers with a budget of about $5 million a year and an equal or greater sum for "liaison" with Guatemalan military. His job included placing and keeping senior Guatemalan officers on his payroll. Among them was Alpirez, who recruited for CIA. Alpirez's intelligence unit spied on Guatemalans and is accused by human rights groups of assassinations. CIA also gave Guatemalan army information on guerrillas. New York Times, 4/2/1995, A11

Guatemala: Death Squads

Guatemala, 1953-84. For 30 years the CIA has been bankrolling a man reported to be behind right-wing terror in Central America. The CIA's protégé, Mario Sandoval Alarcon, former Vice President Of Guatemala, now heads the National Liberation Movement (NLM) founded in 1953 by CIA as a paramilitary force to overthrow Arbenz. By mid-1960s Sandoval emerged as head of the organization. The White Hand or La Mano Blanco with close ties to the NLM was responsible for as many as 8000 deaths in the 1960s plus more in the 1970s. Sandoval a pillar of the World Anti-communist League. The CIA still funds Sandoval. Jack Anderson, Washington Post, 1/30/1984

Guatemala, 1954-76. Effect of CIA coup organized labor all but wiped out. Union membership dropped 100,000 to 27,000 immediately and continued decline thereafter, in part due to death squad activity. Barry, T., and Preusch, D. (1986). AIFLD in Central America, p. 21

Guatemala. Police trained by AID public safety program murdered or disappeared 15,000 people. Lernoux, P. (1982). Cry of the People, p. 186

Guatemala, 1954-84. See Jack Anderson column "Links Reported Among Latin Death Squads." Washington Post, 1/12/1984, N. VA., p. 15

Guatemala, 1970-72. Under Arana presidency, with Mario Sandoval Alarcon and others involved in right-wing terrorism, Arana unleashed one of the most gruesome slaughters in recent Latin American history (only in Chile, following the coup against Allende was the degree of violence greater). The New York Times reported in June 1971 that at least 2000 Guatemalans were assassinated between 11/1970 and 5/1971; most corpses showed signs of torture. Most of killing attributed to the officially supported terrorist organizations Ojo Por Ojo (an eye for an eye) and Mano Blanca. Jones, S., and Tobis, D. (Eds.). (1974). Guatemala, pp. 202-3

Guatemala, 1970-87. Violence by security forces organized by CIA, trained in torture by advisors from Argentina, Chile. Supported by weapon, computer experts from Israel. Marshall, J., Scott P.D., and Hunter, J. (1987). The Iran-Contra Connection, p. 133

Guatemala. 1960-82. Trained military death squads who used "terror tactics" from killing to indiscriminate napalming of villages. Special Forces almost certainly participated in operations despite Congressional prohibition. Marshall, J., Scott P.D., and Hunter, J. (1987). The Iran-Contra Connection, p. 193

Guatemala, 1954. The U.S. ambassador, after overthrow of Arbenz government, gave lists to Armas of radical opponents to be eliminated. NACLA (magazine re Latin America) 2/1983, p. 4

Guatemala, 1985. The World Anti-communist League's point man, Mario Sandoval Alarcon, remains a League member even after exposed as a death squad patriarch who was on the CIA payroll. Jack Anderson, Washington Post, 8/9/1986

Guatemala, 1989. Climate of terror grips Guatemala. Killers, bombers said to target civilian rule. Washington Post, 9/29/1989, A 45

Guatemala, circa 1968-70. U.S. counterinsurgency program turned area into bloody war zone taking the lives of thousands of peasants. Formed Mano Blanca or White Hand. Plan used through out country in 1970. NACLA (magazine re Latin America), 3/74, p. 19

Guatemala. Article by Gary Bass and Babette Grunow on the Guatemalan counterinsurgency forces. Lies of our Time, 6/1993, pp. 11-13

Guatemala. At least three of recent G-2 chiefs were paid by CIA. Crimes are merely examples of a vast, systematic pattern; [the guilty] are only cogs in a large U.S. government apparatus. Colonel Hooker, former DIA chief for Guatemala, says, "it would be an embarrassing situation if you ever had a roll call of everybody in Guatemalan army who ever collected a CIA paycheck." Hooker says CIA payroll is so large that it encompasses most of Army's top decision-makers. Top commanders paid by CIA include General Roberto Matta Galvez, former army chief of staff, head of presidential General Staff and commander of massacres in

El Quiche department; and General Gramajo, defense minister during the armed forces' abduction, rape and torture of Dianna Ortiz, an American nun. Hooker says he once brought Gramajo on a tour of U.S. Three recent Guatemalan heads of state confirm CIA works closely with G-2. Gen. Oscar Humberto Mejia Victores (military dictator from 1983 to 1986) how death squads had originated, he said they started "in the 1960s by CIA." General Efrain Rios Montt (dictator from 1982 to 1983 and the current congress president), who ordered main high-land massacres (662 villages destroyed, by army's own count), said CIA had agents in the G-2. CIA death squads by Allan Nairn. The Nation, 4/17/1995

Guatemala. CIA works inside a Guatemalan army unit that maintains a network of torture centers and has killed thousands of Guatemalan civilians. G-2, since at least 60s, has been advised, trained, armed and equipped by U.S. undercover agents. One of American agents who works with G-2, is Randy Capister. He has been involved in similar operations with army of neighboring El Salvador. A weapons expert known as Joe Jacarino, has operated through out Caribbean, and has accompanied G-2 units on missions into rural zones. Jacarino [possibly a CIA officer]. Celerino Castillo, a former agent of DEA who dealt with G-2 and CIA in Guatemala, says he worked with Capister as well as with Jacarino. Colonel Alpirez at La Aurora base in Guatemala Denied involvement in deaths of Bamaca and Devine. He said CIA advises and helps run G-2. He praised CIA for "professionalism" and close rapport with Guatemalan officers. He said that agency operatives often come to Guatemala on temporary duty, and train G-2. CIA gives sessions at G-2 bases on "contra-subversion" tactics and "how to manage factors of power" to "fortify democracy." During mid-1980s G-2 officers were paid by Jack McCavitt, then CIA station chief. CIA "technical assistance" includes communications gear, computers and special firearms, as well as collaborative use of CIA-owned helicopters that are flown out of piper hangar at La Aurora civilian airport and from a separate U.S. Air facility. Guatemalan army has, since 1978, killed more than 110,000 civilians. G-2 and a smaller, affiliated unit called Archivo have long been openly known in Guatemala as the brain of the terror state. With a contingent of more than 2,000 agents and with sub-units in local army bases, G-2 coordinates torture, assassination and disappearance of dissidents. CIA Death Squads by Allan Nairn. The Nation, 4/17/1995

Guatemala, 1954-95. For at least five years, Colonel Alpirez was also a well-paid agent for CIA and a murderer, a U.S. Congressman says. Alpirez has been linked to the murder of Michael Devine, an American innkeeper who lived and worked in the Guatemalan jungle, and the torture and killing of Efrain Bamaca Velasquez, a leftist guerrilla who was the husband of Jennifer Harbury. CIA ties began in 1954, when Alpirez was about five years old. The CIA engineered a coup in Guatemala that overthrew a leftist president and installed a right-wing military regime. CIA's station in Guatemala began recruiting young and promising military officers who would provide information on the left-wing guerrillas, the internal workings of Guatemala's intertwined military and political leadership, union members, opposition politicians and others. Alpirez was sent in 1970 to School of the Americas (SOA), an elite and recently much-criticized U.S. Army academy at Fort Benning, Ga. Human-rights groups and members of congress point out that SOA's graduates include Roberto D'Aubuisson, leader of death squads in El Salvador; 19 Salvadoran soldiers named in the 1989 assassination of six Jesuit priests and three soldiers accused of the 1980 rape and murder of four U.S. church workers; Lt. Gen. Raoul Cedars and other leaders of the military junta that ran Haiti from 1991 to 1994; General Hugo Banzer, dictator of Bolivia from 1971 to 1978, and General Manuel Antonio Noriega of Panama, now imprisoned in U.S. In 1970s Alpirez was an officer in a counterinsurgency unit known as Kaibiles. Kaibiles became notorious in the early 1980s, known as scorched earth years, when tens of thousands of Indians were killed as military swept across rural Guatemala, systematically destroying villages. Guatemalan government's own count, campaign left 40,000 widows and 150,000 orphans. In late 1980s, Alpirez served as a senior official of an intelligence unit hidden within the general staff and became a paid agent of CIA who paid him tens of thousands of dollars a year. Intelligence unit, known as "Archivo," or archives, stands accused of assassination, infiltration of civilian agencies and

spying on Guatemalans in violation of the nation's Constitution. Archivo works like the CIA. "It was also working as a death squad." New York Times, 3/25/1995

Guatemala, 1954-95. U.S. Undercover agents have worked for decades inside a Guatemalan army unit that has tortured and killed thousands of Guatemalan citizens, per the Nation weekly magazine. "working out of the U.S. Embassy and living in safe houses and hotels, agents work through an elite group of Guatemalan officers who are secretly paid by CIA and implicated personally in numerous political crimes and assassinations "unit known as G-2 and its secret collaboration with CIA were described by U.S. and Guatemalan operatives and confirmed by three former Guatemalan heads of state. Colonel Julio Roberto Alpirez, Guatemalan officer implicated in murders of guerrilla leader Efrain Bamaca Velasquez — husband of an American lawyer — and rancher Michael Devine discussed in an interview how intelligence agency advises and helps run G-2. He said agents came to Central American country often to train G-2 men and he described attending CIA sessions at G-2 bases on "contra-subversion" tactics and "how to manage factors of power" to "fortify democracy" the Nation quoted U.S. and Guatemalan intelligence sources as saying at least three recent G-2 chiefs have been on CIA payroll — General Edgar Godoy Gatan, Colonel Otto Perez Molina and General Francisco Ortega Menaldo. `It would be embarrassing if you ever had a roll call of everybody in Guatemalan army who ever collected a CIA paycheck," report quoted Colonel George Hooker, U.S. DIA chief in Guatemala from 1985 to 1989, as saying. Human rights group Amnesty International has said Guatemalan army killed more than 110,000 civilians since 1978 with G-2 and another unit called Archivo known as main death squads. Reuters, 3/30/1995

Guatemala, 1960-90. Human rights groups say at least 40,000 Guatemalans "disappeared" in last three decades. Most were poor Indians. Anthropologists, led by Clyde Snow, dug away at a village site. Maria Lopez had a husband and a son in one grave. She said on morning of Valentine's Day 1982, members of anti-guerrilla militia took her husband and others. They had refused to join militias known as civil self-defense patrols and were killed. Six unknown clandestine graves in San Jose Pacho. Human rights groups blame most disappearances on army-run civil self-defense patrols set up under presidencies of General Lucas Garcia and Brig. Gen. Rios Montt. There are hundreds of clandestine graves filled with victims of the militias, right-wing death squads and brutal counterinsurgency campaigns. Washington Times, 8/5/1992, p. A9

Guatemala, 1970-95. Jennifer Harbury's story. Time, 4/3/1995, p. 48

Guatemala, 1981-95. DIA reports re MLN particularly disturbing, as they raise grave questions about extent of U.S. knowledge of MLN activities in earlier years when MLN leader Mario Sandoval Alarcon was tied to Reagan Administration's efforts to support Contras. Having come to power in 1954 with the CIA-backed overthrow of Colonel Jacobo Arbenze, MLN leader Sandoval was accused in 1980 by Elias Barahona, former press secretary to the Guatemalan Interior Minister, of having worked for CIA. Head of National Congress from 1970 to 1974, at which time he was made vice president, a position he kept until his term expired in 1978, Sandoval is widely regarded as father of Latin America's "death squads." In 1970's, he had a close relationship with Roberto D'Aubuisson, deputy chief of El Salvador's national security agency (Anseal). D'Aubuisson reportedly was behind El Salvador's death squads. Sandoval was so close to Reagan administration that he was one of only two Guatemalans invited to attend Reagan's inauguration. Intelligence — a computerized intelligence newsletter published in France, 4/24/1995, p. 1

Guatemala, 1984-95. Article, "Murder as Policy." Washington was supporting Guatemalan army in a number of ways: green berets trained Kaibul massacre force, the army's self-proclaimed "messengers of death." U.S. openly sold weapons to Guatemala — used in

massacre in Santiago Atitlan. Hundreds of U.S. troops (mostly National Guard) helped civic action and road building in massacre zones. The Nation, 4/24/1995, pp. 547-8

Guatemala, 1985-93. CIA collected intelligence re ties between Guatemalan insurgents and Cuba — CIA passed the information to U.S. military, which was assisting Guatemalan army extinguish opposition. Washington Post, 3/30/1995, A1,10

Guatemala, 1985-95. Bombings against military-reformist Christian Democratic Party (DCG) of then President Vinicio Cerezo to topple Cerezo, who perceived as being too soft on rebels. A 10/1988 DIA intelligence report alerted American authorities that MLN, which was involved in "plotting a coup against Cerezo in the past," is "now apparently prepared to use violent tactics to undermine DCG government." MLN "is reportedly planning a bombing campaign directed against members of ruling DCG. MLN intends to use recently obtained explosives to target personal vehicles of DCG Congressional representatives in order to frighten them. After assessing their impact, MLN will consider initiating a second stage of its anti-DCG campaign that will include killing of various individuals. MLN has selected potential targets in Guatemala city. U.S. Army and DIA, getting regular, high-level intelligence from senior Guatemalan army officers and other sources about crimes, notably murder, being committed by Guatemalan army personnel. Source and depth of intelligence raises questions about what U.S. Government actually knew about Guatemalan army complicity in civilian murders in that country throughout the 1980s, including alleged involvement of Guatemalan Colonel Julio Roberto Alpirez, then a CIA agent, in 1990 and 1992 murders of American innkeeper Michael Devine and guerrilla fighter Efrain Bamaco Velazquez, husband of an American, Jennifer Harbury." Intelligence — a computerized intelligence newsletter published in France, 4/24/1995, p. 1

Guatemala, 1988-91. CIA station chief in Guatemala from 1988 to 1991 was a Cuban American. He had about 20 officers with a budget of about $5 million a year and an equal or greater sum for "liaison" with Guatemalan military. His job included placing and keeping senior Guatemalan officers on his payroll. Among them was Alpirez, who recruited others for CIA. Alpirez's intelligence unit spied on Guatemalans and is accused by human rights groups of assassinations. CIA also gave Guatemalan army information on the guerrillas. New York Times, 4/2/1995, A11

Guatemala, 1989. 25 students in two years killed by squads. Entire university student association has been silenced. U.S. backed governments in virtual genocide have more than 150,000 victims. AI called this genocide a "government program of political murder." The Nation, 3/5/1990, cover, p. 308

Guatemala, 1990-95. Member of House Intelligence Committee, Robert G. Torricelli (D- NJ.) said, in letter to President Clinton, that a Guatemalan military officer who ordered killings of an American citizen and a guerrilla leader married to a North American lawyer was a paid agent of CIA. CIA knew of killings, but concealed its knowledge for years. Another member of House Intelligence Committee confirmed Torricelli's claims. Torricelli wrote in letter to President that the "Direct involvement of CIA in the murder of these individuals leads me to the extraordinary conclusion that the agency is simply out of control and that it contains what can only be labeled a criminal element." Colonel Julio Roberto Alpirez, Bamaca, and Michael Devine. Tim Weiner, New York Times, 3/23/1995

Guatemala, 1990-95. Article, El Buki's Tale — Murder of Michael Devine. Covert Action Information Bulletin (Quarterly), Summer 1995, pp. 32-37

Guatemala, 1990-95. Article, The Agency, Off Target. Two Deaths, a Rogue CIA Informant and a Big Pot of Trouble. Re deaths of Michael Devine and Efrain Bamaca Velasquez —

Harbury's husband. CIA paid Colonel Alpirez $43,000 after it learned of cover up of deaths. U.S. News & World Report, 4/10/1995, p. 46

Guatemala, 1990-95. Assassin of Michael Devine and of the husband of Jennifer Harbury, Colonel Julio Roberto Alpirez, was on CIA's payroll and had attended School of Americas (SOA) on two separate occasions. In January 1995 when State and NSC pieced together what CIA knew, the ambassador demanded removal of CIA's station chief. CIA fought to stop disclosure of its relationship with the Colonel. Administration officials began to mistrust what CIA was saying about the case. The Colonel first came to U.S. In 1970 as an army cadet at SOA. He returned to SOA in 1989, to take year long Command and General Staff course when he was already on CIA payroll. In 1990, Michael Devine, who ran a hotel, apparently stumbled on a smuggling operation involving Guatemalan military. He was killed. New York Times, 3/24/1995, A3

Guatemala, 1990-95. CIA last month removed its station chief in Guatemala for failing to report promptly information linking a paid CIA informer to the slaying of a Guatemalan guerrilla fighter married to Jennifer Harbury. Guatemalan army Colonel Julio Roberto Alpirez, was paid $44,000 by CIA in 1992 for secretly supplying intelligence on the civil war. At time of payment CIA had evidence linking him to the slaying of U.S. citizen Michael Devine (after he found about a military smuggling operation or because he had a weapon). Washington Post, 3/25/1995, A1,20

Guatemala, 1990-95. Clinton has threatened to fire anyone in CIA who withheld information from him about activities of its informant in Guatemala, Colonel Julio Roberto Alpirez. What is more likely to be agency's undoing is its failure to tell congress that only six months after he graduated from command-level courses at School of Americas Colonel Alpirez, a member of military intelligence on agency's payroll, ordered murder of a U.S. citizen, William Devine, and then torture-murder of husband of an American woman. White House officials, and President Clinton in particular, were very angry about Guatemalan affair but NSC Anthony lake was arguing that there is no evidence that CIA tried to deceive president. Los Angeles Times reported that late last year State Department found information about Devine murder in its files that appeared to have originated with CIA and had not been passed on to White House. This discovery prompted State Department and White House to ask CIA for more information. State initially asked CIA for information on rebel Commandante Efrain Bamaca Velasquez and received a few modest files. Several weeks later, State again asked CIA for information but this time on "Commandante Everardo," which was Commandante Bamaca's well-known nom de guerre. Only then did CIA produced incriminating data that it held solely under that name. CIA has tried to ease situation with a rare "leak" about itself to press. On 3/24, Los Angeles Times quoted "CIA sources" as saying Agency was only told after the fact that its Guatemalan informant, Colonel Alpirez, was present at killing in 1990 of Devine, a U.S. citizen who ran a popular tourist resort in Guatemala. CIA insisted to the paper that it cut ties with Colonel at that point, but, significantly, sources did not put a date on rupture. That gave it "wiggle room" to say it didn't find out about Colonel's involvement in March 1992 torture-murder of Bamaca until early this year. CIA gave Colonel Alpirez a "final payment" of $44,000 at about time of Bamaca's murder. Per National public radio commentator Daniel Schorr, CIA station chief in Guatemala has been fired for failing to relay information. But New York Times says he was reassigned to Langley in January, after U.S. Ambassador to Guatemala accused him of withholding information. CIA has assigned its inspector General, Fred Hitz, to investigate. CIA station chief in Switzerland, who held a top position at Department of Operations (DO) Latin American Division from 1990 to 1992, is now being questioned, as is Jack Devine, who headed division from January 1983 until last October. He was appointed Associate Deputy Director of Operations in October after John MacGaffin was removed from that post for secretly giving an award to a senior operative who had just been disciplined in Ames case. Devine's successor is a woman, first to direct a DO division. She is in her 50s, was previously station chief in El Salvador, and is said by officials

outside CIA to be very forthcoming about case. Intelligence — a computerized intelligence newsletter published in France, 3/27/1995, p. 30

Guatemala, 1990-95. Guatemalan soldiers killed Michael Devine under orders from Colonel Mario Garcia Catalan, per convicted soldier, Solbal. He killed as the army convinced he had bought a stolen rifle. They tortured him before killing him. Solbal says Colonel Alpirez gave food and shelter to the killers. Washington Times, 5/15/1995, A13

Guatemala, 1990-95. Letter from Congressman Torricelli to President Clinton about involvement of CIA in two murders in Guatemala. 3/22/1995

Guatemala, 1990-95. Rep. Robert Torricelli, D-NJ., who is on the HPSCI, has requested an investigation from the Justice Department on role of the CIA in the murder of Michael Devine and Efrain Bamaca Velasquez. Request was made in a letter to President Clinton. Guatemalan intelligence officer who ordered the murders, Colonel Julio Roberto Alpirez, was a paid agent of the CIA. Torricelli claims that the NSA, CIA, State Department., and NSC covered up the involvement of a paid agent in the murders. Devine, who was killed in 1990, was an American citizen and Velasquez, who was killed in 1992, was married to an U.S. Citizen. CNN Headline News, 3/23/1995 and AP, 3/23/1995

Guatemala, 1990-95. Revelations about a CIA informer linked to two murders (Devine and Bamaca) in Guatemala helped exhume embarrassing relationship between U.S. military and intelligence personnel and a Central American regime notorious for human rights violations. Washington Post, 4/2/1995, A29

Guatemala, 1990-95. Tim Weiner article "A Guatemalan Officer and the CIA." Colonel is recalled as a "good soldier" and a murdering spy. New York Times, 3/26/1995

Guatemala, 1990-95. Two colonels suspended in Guatemala for covering up 1990 killing of Michael Devine. One was a paid CIA informant at time of killing. Colonel Mario Garcia Catalan also suspended. Washington Post, 4/27/1995, A29

Guatemala, 1990-95. Wife of Michael Devine discusses slaying of her husband. New York Times, 3/28/1995, A1,6

Guatemala, 1991-94. State Department reported in 1991, that "military, civil patrols and police continued to commit a majority of major human rights abuses, including extrajuridicial killings torture and disappearances." Guatemalan counterinsurgency campaign devised by U.S. counterinsurgency experts Caesar Sereseres and Colonel George Minas. Former served as a consultant to RAND Corporation and State Department's Office of Policy Planning. Minas served as military attache in Guatemala in early 1980s. Both encouraged population control such as Vietnam-style military-controlled strategic hamlets and civilian defense patrols. Today Guatemala is largest warehouse for cocaine transshipments to U.S. Drug trade run by military which tries to blame the leftists. Covert Action Information Bulletin (Quarterly), Spring 1994, pp. 28-33

Guatemala, 1991-95. U.S. Had information in 10/1991 linking a paid CIA informer in slaying of a U.S. citizen. Colonel Roberto Alpirez was dropped from CIA's payroll but remained a contact through 7/1992 — when he allegedly ordered another killing of Efrain Bamaca Velasquez — husband of Jennifer Harbury. Washington Post, 3/24/1995, A1,27

Guatemala, 1992. Rights abuses in Guatemala continue, paramilitary civilian patrols — self defense patrols — accused of campaign of terror, control rural areas. Patrols answer to military. Washington Post, 10/4/1992, A35

Guatemala, 1995. President Clinton said he would dismiss any CIA official who withheld information on death of Jennifer Harbury's husband. Rep Torricelli said CIA withheld information for years. Washington Times, 3/25/1995, A3

Guatemala, 1970-95. Discussion of Torricelli, Harbury, Devine, Bamaco, etc. The death of husband of Harbury not a rogue operation. This was standard operating procedure in El Salvador and Guatemala and elsewhere around the globe. CIA organized death squads, financed them, equipped them, trained them, etc. That's what the CIA does. Once in a decade the U.S. public hears about this. CIA should be abolished. The CIA mislead Congress about the Devine case. Getting rid of CIA is not enough — the CIA did not act alone. The National Security Agency and the Army may have been involved in Guatemala. The Progressive, 5/1995, pp. 8,9

Haiti: Watch List

Haiti, 1986-93. In 1986 the CIA funded the national intelligence service (SIN) under guise of fighting narcotics — but SIN never produced drug intelligence and used CIA money for political operations. Sin involved in spying on so-called subversive groups...they doing nothing but political repression...they targeted people who were for change. CIA used distorted data to discredit Aristide. NACLA (Magazine re Latin America), 2/1994, p. 35

Haiti, 1990-94. Emannuel Constant, leader of Haiti's FRAPH hit squad, worked for CIA and U.S. intelligence helped launch FRAPH. Haiti's dreaded attaches paid for by a U.S. Government-funded project that maintains sensitive files on Haiti's poor. The Nation, 10/24/1994, 458

Haiti, 1990-94. U.S. officials involved in refugee policy have backgrounds suggestive of Phoenix-like program activities. Luis Moreno, State Department, has background in counterterrorism. Gunther Wagner, senior intelligence officer at INS's southwest regional office, assigned to investigate repression against repatriated refugees. Wagner had served as public safety adviser to Vietnamese National Special Branch for 5 years and later advised Somoza's National Guard. INS database on all asylum interviews at Guantanamo. INS, on demand, gave State Department unrestricted access to all interview files. U.S. Officers hand Haitian authorities computer print-outs of names of all Haitians being repatriated. CIA funded service intelligence nacionale (SIN), who's de facto primary function was a war against popular movement — including torture and assassination — a fact admitted by a CIA officer to an official in Aristide's government. U.S. shares "anti-narcotics intelligence" with Haitian military. The Progressive, 4/1994, p. 21

Haiti, 1991-94. Asylum-promoting project gets family information that fed into a computer project that could be used to target for repression. The Progressive, 9/1994, pp. 19-26

Haiti, 1991-94. Seven chief attaches arranged killings and brought victims to houses. Four of the seven worked for Centers for Development and Health (CDS), funded by U.S. AID. One was Gros Sergo, and other was Fritz Joseph who chief FRAPH recruiter in Cite Soleil. Two others are Marc Arthur and Gors Fanfan. CDS files track every family in Cite Soleil. The Nation, 10/24/1994, p. 461

Haiti, 1994. AID programs for Haitian popular groups; Immigration and Naturalization service, with computerized files on 58,000 political-asylum applicants and army intelligence S-2 section of 96th Civil Affairs Battalion assigned to monitor refugees at Guantanamo Bay. Per Capt. James Vick, unit develops networks of informants and works with marine corps counterintelligence in "identifying ringleaders of unrest and in weeding out troublemakers." 96th's files enter military intelligence system. Gunther Wagner, a former Nazi, served with U.S. In Phoenix operation in Vietnam, and in Nicaragua — now heads State Department's

Cuba-Haiti task force. Pentagon's Atlantic command commissioned Booz, Allen, Hamilton, to devise a computer model of Haitian society. Results of study given. Priority of study to build an "organized information bank...." no change expected in ruling clique of Haiti. Article by Allan Nairn. The Nation, 10/3/1994, pp. 344-48

Haiti: Death Squads

Haiti. CIA officer assigned 1973-75 Coordination with Ton-Ton Macoute, "Baby Doc" Duvalier's private death squad. Covert Action Information Bulletin (Quarterly), 9/1980, p. 16

Haiti, 1985-93. CIA created an intelligence service in Haiti: National Intelligence Service, (SIN) from its initials in French, to fight cocaine trade, but unit became instrument of political terror whose officers engaged in drug traffic, killings and torture. Unit produced little drug intelligence. U.S. cut ties to group after 1991 military coup. New York Times, 11/14/1993 pp. 1,12

Haiti, 1986-93 INS database on all asylum interviews at Guantanamo. INS, on demand, gave State Department unrestricted access to all interview files. U.S. officers hand Haitian authorities computer print-outs of names of all Haitians being repatriated. CIA funded service intelligence nacionale (SIN), who's de facto primary function was a war against popular movement — including torture and assassination — a fact admitted by a CIA officer to an official in Aristide's government. U.S. shares "anti-narcotics intelligence" with Haitian military. The Progressive, 4/1994, p. 21

Haiti, 1990-94. Clinton administration denied report CIA helped set up Haiti's pro-army Militia — FRAPH. Officials refused to comment whether FRAPH leader Emmanuel Constant was a paid CIA informant. "Nation" article said Constant worked for both the CIA and the DIA. Colonel Collins of DIA and Donald Terry of CIA were his contacts. Collins urged Constant to set up FRAPH. Mr. Constant, per Washington Times, was a paid U.S. Informant on Haitian political activities and assisting anti-drug efforts. Relationship broken off early this year. FRAPH has been linked to murders, public beatings and arson. CIA officers in past worked with Haiti's national intelligence service. Washington Times, 10/7/1994, A16

Haiti, 1990-94. Emannuel Constant, leader of Haiti's FRAPH hit squad, worked for CIA and U.S. Intelligence helped launch FRAPH. Haiti's dreaded attaches paid for by a U.S. Government-funded project that maintains sensitive files on Haiti's poor. In 10/3/1994, issue of Nation carried Nairn's article "The Eagle is Landing," he quoted a U.S. official praising Constant as a young republican that U.S. Intelligence had encouraged to form FRAPH. Constant confirmed that account. He first said his handler was Colonel Patrick Collins, DIA attache in Haiti, and later claimed another U. S. official urged him to form FRAPH. Collins first approached Constant while he taught a course at HQs of CIA-run national intelligence service (SIN) and built up a computer data base at Bureau of Information and Coordination. FRAPH originally was called Haitian Resistance League. Constant was working for the CIA at SIN while it attacked the poor. The Nation, 10/24/1994, p. 458

Haiti, 1991-94. Emmanuel Constant (son of a Duvalier general), who had been on the CIA payroll since the mid-'1980s. With U.S. intelligence advice, formed FRAPH, a political front and paramilitary death squad offshoot of the Haitian army, that began to systematically target democratic militants and hold the country hostage with several armed strikes. On 10/11/1993, day U.S.S. Harlan County and U.S. and Canadian soldiers were to land, even though CIA had been tipped off, FRAPH organized a dockside demonstration of several dozen armed thugs. Ship turned around. U.S. asylum processing program hand-picked and exported almost 2,000 grassroots leaders. In three years after coup, 7,000-man army and its paramilitary assistants killed at least 3,000 and probably over 4,000 people, tortured

thousands, and created tens of thousands of refugees and 300,000 internally displaced people. Covert Action Information Bulletin (Quarterly), Winter 1994/1995, pp. 7-13

Haiti, 1991-94. Haitian paramilitary chief spied for CIA. Emmanuel "Toto" Constant, head of Haiti's notorious FRAPH, secretly provided information to U.S. intelligence while his group killed people. Constant paid by CIA for giving intelligence officers information about Aristide beginning shortly after Aristide ousted in 9/1991 coup. CIA dropped him last Spring. Constant's organization blamed for killing hundreds of supporters of Aristide — and organizing demonstration that drove off U.S. troop-carrying Harlan County last October. In "Nation" article, U.S. Defense Attache, Colonel Patrick Collins, had encouraged Constant to form FRAPH. U.S. intelligence agencies had extensive penetration of Haitian military and paramilitary groups. Using Constant as source may explain why CIA's reporting on Aristide was skewed. FRAPH not formed until 8/1993, 9 months after Collins left Haiti. Washington Post, 10/9/1994, A1,30

Haiti, 1993. Young men kidnapped by armed thugs seldom reappear. Under de facto government, as many as 3000 may have been killed. Aristide negotiating his return with UN. The Nation, 5/3/1993, p. 580

Haiti, 1995. Interview with Allan Nairn, April 1995 "Criminal Habits." Z Magazine 6/1995, pp. 22-9

Honduras: Death Squads

Honduras, 1981-87. Florencio Caballero, who served as a torturer and a member of a death squad, said he was trained in Texas by the CIA. He said he was responsible for the torture and slaying of 120 Honduran and other Latin American citizens. The CIA taught him and 24 other people in a army intelligence unit for 6 months in interrogation. psychological methods — to study fears and weaknesses of a prisoner, make him stand up, don't let him sleep, keep him naked and isolated, put rats and cockroaches in his cell, give him bad food, throw cold water on him, change the temperature. Washington Post, 6/8/1988, B3

Honduras, circa 1982-87. Army Battalion 3/16, a special counterinsurgency force which many considered a kind of death squad, was formed in 1980. Florencio Caballero, a former battalion member, described a clandestine paramilitary structure for repressing leftists. Caballero, who studied interrogation techniques in Houston, said the CIA was extensively involved in training squad members. NACLA 2/1988, p. 15, from New York Times, 5/2/1987

Honduras, March 1986. Apart from CIA training of a battalion implicated in death squad activities and torture, Honduran army defector said CIA arranged a fabricated forced "confession" by kidnapped prisoner that he headed a guerrilla front and had planned attacks against U.S. installations. This in operation truth. Chomsky, N. (1988). The Culture of Terrorism, p. 239

Honduras. General G. Alvarez Martinez, CIA-Contra point man in Honduras, had death squad operation run by Ricardo Lau. Alvarez godfather to new CIA Chief of Station's daughter. Marshall, J., Scott P.D., and Hunter, J. (1987). The Iran-Contra Connection, pp. 78-9

Honduras, 1982-86. Zuniga told congressional staffers about the 316 Battalion established with the knowledge and assistance of the U.S. Embassy. By 1984 more than 200 Honduran teachers, students, labor leaders, and opposition politicians had been murdered. The CIA had knowledge of the killings. Zuniga killed in 9/1985. Mother Jones, 4/1987, p. 48

Honduras. Capt. Alexander Hernandez, a graduate of U.S. International Police services training program, has played a central role in Honduran death squad activities and the war in Nicaragua. Early 1986 New York Times reports that CIA was providing "training and advice in intelligence collection" to Hernandez' unit "as part of a program to cut off arms shipments from Nicaragua to leftist rebels in Honduras and El Salvador." New York Times also says that CIA knew of the assassinations but "looked the other way." The Nation, 6/7/1986, p. 793

Honduras, circa 1981-84. Honduran government established a secret unit that seized, interrogated, tortured, and murdered more than 130 people between 1981-84. Unit named Battalion 316. Unit operated with CIA supervision and training and received U.S. instruction in interrogation, surveillance and hostage rescue. Commander of unit in first years was a graduate of International Police Academy. NA, 2/20/1988, pp. 224-5 The clandestine houses and command post of 316 were visited by CIA agents. NA, 1/23/1988, p. 85

Honduras, Nicaragua, 1982. A Contra commander with the FDN admitted he helped organize a death squad in Honduras with the approval and cooperation of the CIA. Honduran government agreed to host the death squad and provide it with cover, since the group would kill Honduran dissidents at the government's request. The commander admitted he participated in assassinations. CIA "Colonel Raymond" congratulated the squad. The Progressive, 8/1986, p. 25

Honduras, Nicaragua, 1984-85. Honduran army investigators report that Contras have been involved in death-squad killings in Honduras. At least 18 Hondurans and an unknown number of Salvadorans and Nicaraguans have been killed by the Contras. Washington Post, 1/15/1985, A12

Honduras, 1980-83. Agents of Battalion 316, a Honduran death squad, received interrogation training in Texas from CIA in 1980. CIA agents maintained contact with unit in early 1980's, visiting detention centers during interrogation and obtaining intelligence gleaned from torture victims. See Americas Watch "Human Rights in Honduras" (May 1987). Dillon, S. (1991). Commandos, p. 101

Honduras, 1980-83. Gustavo Alvarez, formerly head of police, in 1981 a general running entire armed forces. Worked closely with U.S. on Contras. Alvarez had organized military intelligence Battalion 316 — first Honduran death squad. Argentines sent 15-20 officers to work with Alvarez on Contras. Senior officer Osvaldo Riveiro. Garvin, G. (1992). Everybody Has His Own Gringo, p. 41

Honduras, 1980-89. CIA and State Department worked with a Honduran military unit called Battalion 316 during the 1980s. Unit was responsible for cracking down on dissidents. AP, 6/12/1995. Honduran special prosecutor for human rights asking the U.S. to turn over classified information on Ambassadors John Negroponte and Chris Arcos and several CIA agents connected to the disappearance of dissidents in the 1980s. AP, 6/13/1995

Honduras, 1980-89. Colonel Gustavo Alvarez Martinez shot to death in 1989. Alvarez spent years networking with fascists and ultra right terrorists who in World Anti-communist League and its sister organization, the Latin American Anti-communist Confederation, or CAL. He most famous for streamlining Honduras's death squads and uniting them under his control. Alvarez gathered together the National Front for the Defense of Democracy, the Honduran Anti-communist Movement (MACHO), and the Anti-communist Combat Army — death squads all — and combined them with several governmental forces, including the Fuerzas de Seguridad Publica (FUSEP), Departmento Nacional de Investigaciones (DIN), and Tropas Especiales Para Selva y Nocturnas (TESON). With Director of Central Intelligence Casey, Alvarez and Negroponte turned Honduras into a staging ground for Contra incursions into Nicaragua. Honduran Congress issued Decree 33, which declared terrorist anyone who

distributed political literature, associated with foreigners, joined groups deemed subversive by the government, damaged property, or destroyed documents. Alvarez's forces murdered upwards of 500 people. He ousted as Honduras's dictator in 1984 and became special consultant to RAND Corporation. Lies of our Time, 3/1994, pp. 3-5

Honduras, 1980-89. Eleven senior officers who are believed to have been involved with Battalion 316 have been convicted on charges of kidnapping, torturing and attempting to murder six students in 1982. Officers include one general, nine colonels, and one captain. AP, 7/25/1995

Honduras, 1980-89. See entry in Liaison from Baltimore Sun, 6/11-18/1995

Honduras, 1980-93. CIA-trained death squad issue in presidential campaign. In early 1980s, Battalion 3-16, of Honduran military whose members instructed by and worked with CIA "disappeared" scores of activists. Both candidates accusing other of connections to Battalion 3-16. In 1980 25-Honduran officers to U.S. for training per sworn testimony in International Court by Honduran intelligence officer who participated — Florencio Caballero. Group trained in interrogation by a team from FBI and CIA. Training continued in Honduras. U.S. Trainers joined by instructors from Argentina and Chile — sessions focused on surveillance and rescuing kidnap victims. Battalion 3-16 engaged in a program of systematic disappearances and murder from 1981 to 1984. By March 1984, 100-150 students, teachers, unionists and travelers picked up and secretly executed. Squads, according to Inter-American Court of Human Rights, belonged to 3-16. Squads modus operandi included weeks of surveillance of suspects followed by capture by disguised agents using vehicles with stolen license plates, interrogation, torture in secret jails followed by execution and secret burial. CIA's connection to 3-16 confirmed by General Alvarez, who created and commanded squad from 1980 through 1984. He later became chief of police and then head of the armed forces. Alvarez said CIA "gave good training, lie detectors, phone-tapping devices and electronic equipment to analyze intelligence." CIA men informed when 3-16 abducted suspected leftists. When bodies found, 3-16 put out story they killed by guerrillas. CIA looked other way. Ambassador Negroponte in 1982 denied existence of death squads. State Department was attacking as communist, anti-democratic and a terrorist group, Committee for Defense of Human Rights in Honduras that was exposing 3-16. In a barracks coup, Alvarez forced into exile in Miami and became paid consultant to Pentagon writing study on low-intensity conflict. Members of 3-16 still in positions of power in government. Congressional intelligence committee in 1988 looked into CIA's role with 3-16, but findings never published. Op-ed by Anne Manuel. Washington Post, 11/28/1993, C5

Honduras, 1982-83. Ex-guard Benito "Mack" Bravo reportedly killed dozens of Contra recruits at his La Ladosa training base near El Paraiso. Mack suspected many were Sandinista infiltrators. In one case, FDN ordered four ex-guardsmen executed for insubordination and allegedly selling arms to El Salvador's FMLN. They also had been accused of killing recruits. Honduran military participated in the execution. Dillon, S. (1991). Commandos, pp. 118-124

Honduras, 1988. Director human rights commission in Honduras and associate killed by assassins. The Progressive, 2/1990, p. 46

Honduras, 1988. Honduran human rights leader Ramon Custodio Lopez accused Battalion 3-16 of murdering a politician and a teacher on 14 January 1988. Custodio relied on testimony by former battalion member sergeant Fausto Caballero. In 11/30/1988. Honduras was condemned by Inter-American Court of Human Rights in 1988 for disappearance of Angel Manfredo Velazquez. Battalion 3-16, along with DNI (Directorate of National Intelligence), and FUSEP (National Police) were implicated, all of which have received training from CIA. Intelligence Parapolitics, 9/1988, p. 8

Honduras, 1988. Jose Isaias Vilorio, an intelligence officer and former death squad member, was shot dead on 1 January 1988. Isaias was to testify before Inter-American Court on Human Rights (New York Times, 20 January 1988). Human rights leader and legislator Miguel Pavon was killed on 14 January 1988 after testifying before Inter-American Court. Also killed was Moises Landaverde, a teacher who was riding in Pavon's car at the time of attack. Intelligence Parapolitics, 3/1988, p. 12

Honduras, Argentina, 1980-89. A survivor tells her story: treatment for a leftist — kicks and freezing water and electric shocks. In between, a visitor from CIA. CIA worked closely with the Honduran military while the military tortured and killed dissidents during the 1980s, human rights groups said. A government official also said Argentine military advisers, with U.S. support, were brought in to help monitor leftist activism. "At least nine Argentine military (officers), supported by the CIA, trained many Honduran officers to prevent communism from entering Honduras," said Leo Valladares of the government's human rights commission. Bertha Oliva, head of committee of relatives of the disappeared, claimed CIA knew of disappearances by Honduran security forces and that "the U.S. Embassy had absolute power in this country." in the first of a series of four articles, the Baltimore Sun reported Sunday that CIA and the State Department collaborated with a secret Honduran military unit known as Battalion 316 in the 1980s in cracking down on Honduras dissidents. Following a 14-month investigation. In order to keep up public support for Reagan administration's war efforts in Central America, U.S. officials misled congress and the public about Honduran military abuses. Collaboration was revealed in classified documents and in interviews with U.S. and Honduran participants. Among those interviewed by the Sun were three former Battalion 316 torturers who acknowledged their crimes and detailed the battalion's close relationship with CIA. Ramon Custodio, president of non-government human rights commission, said a former member of Battalion 316, Florencio Caballero, disclosed that CIA in early 1980s took 24 soldiers to the U.S. for training in anti-subversive techniques. At the time, Custodio said, "Honduras' policy was oriented to detaining and summarily executing those who did not please the government or the military." Battalion 316 was created in 1984 and its first commander was General Luis Alonso Discua, current armed forces chief. A government report subsequently blamed it in the cases of 184 missing people. Baltimore Sun, 6/15/1995

Honduras, Israel. During Contra war Honduran military intelligence officers on double salary from CIA and Colombian drug cartels, who saw advantage of using Honduran airstrips for transiting cocaine under cover of war effort. Israelis also trained Honduran death squads. Cockburn, A. and Cockburn, L. (1991). Dangerous Liaison, p. 225

Honduras, Assassinations, 1980-84. CIA and Contras accused of running Honduran death squads, killing over 200. CIA officials "looked the other way" when people disappeared. Violence tapered off after ouster of CIA backed military commander Alvarez. Ricardo Lau running Contra intelligence, also death squads. Accused arranging assassination Archbishop Romero in El Salvador. Marshall, J., Scott P.D., and Hunter, J. (1987). The Iran-Contra Connection, pp. 132-3

Indonesia: Watch List

Indonesia, 1963-65. U.S. trained unionist spies laid groundwork for post 1965 coup gestapu massacre of leftists by gathering intelligence on leftist unionists. Counterspy, Winter 1979, p. 27

Indonesia, 1965-66. "U.S. officials' lists aided Indonesian blood bath in '60s." U.S. officials supplied the names of thousands of members of Indonesian Communist Party (PKI) to the army that was hunting them down and killing them in a crackdown branded as one of the century's worst massacres, former U.S. Diplomats and CIA officials say. Robert J. Martens,

Former member of embassy's political section said, "it really was a big help to the army.... They probably killed a lot of people..." Martens said. He headed an embassy group of state Department and CIA officials that spent two years compiling the lists. He said he delivered them to an army intermediary. The lists were a detailed who's who of the leadership of the PKI that included names of provincial, city and other local PKI members and leaders of mass organizations. Ambassador Marshall Green, his deputy Jack Lydman, and political section chief Edward Masters admitted approving the release of the names. Army intermediary was an aide to Adam Malik. The aide, Tirta Kentjana Adhyatman, confirmed that he had met with Martens and received lists of thousands of names...given to Sukarno's HQs. Information on who captured and killed came to Americans from Suharto's HQs, according to former CIA deputy chief of station Joseph Lazarsky. Lazarsky said "we were getting a good account in Jakarta of who was being picked up,"..."the army had a 'shooting list' of about 4,000 to 5,000 people." Lazarsky said the check-off work was also carried out at CIA's intelligence directorate in D.C. By end of January 1966, "the checked off names were so numerous the CIA analysts in Washington concluded the PKI leadership had been destroyed." Washington Post, 5/21/1990, A5

Indonesia, 1965-66. In response to Kathy Kadane's May 21 article in Washington Post, Robert J. Martens responds "it is true I passed names of PKI leaders and senior cadre system to non-communist forces during the six months of chaos between the so-called coup and the ultimate downfall of Sukarno. The names I gave were based entirely on Indonesian communist press and were available to everyone. This was senior cadre system of the PKI few thousand at most out of the 3.5 millions claimed party members. I categorically deny that I headed an embassy group that spent two years compiling the lists." Washington Post, 6/2/1990, A18

Indonesia, 1985. Indonesia: years of living dangerously. CIA's role in bloody coup in Indonesia in 1965. Utne Reader. 2/1991, p. 38, two pages

Indonesia: Death Squads

Indonesia, 1965-66 Indonesian generals approached U.S. for equipment "to arm Moslem and nationalist youths for use in central Java against the PKI." Washington responded by supplying covert aid, dispatched as "medicines." Washington Post, 6/13/1990, A 22

Indonesia, 1965-66. Kathy Kadane's story for States News Service disclosed part played by CIA and State Department officials in 1965-66 blood bath in Indonesia. Kadane reported that U.S. officials in Jakarta furnished names of about 5,000 communist activists to the Indonesian army and then checked off the names as the army reported the individuals had been killed or captured. The Nation, 7/9/1990, p. 43

Indonesia, 1965. CIA and State Department officials provided name lists to Indonesian army that killed 250,000. The Progressive, 7/10/1990, p. 9

Indonesia, 1965. Ex-agents say CIA compiled death lists for Indonesians. San Francisco Examiner, 5/20/1990

Indonesia, 1965-66. Article by Michael Vatikiotis and Mike Fonte; Rustle of Ghosts. (1965 Indonesian coup). Far Eastern Economic Review, 8/2/1990, 2 pages

Indonesia, 1965-85. Death squads roam at will, killing subversives, suspected criminals by thousands. Blum, W. (1986). The CIA A Forgotten History, p. 221

Iran: Watch List

Iran, 1953-54. CIA gave Shah intelligence on Tudeh party facilitate anti-Tudeh Campaign. Gasiorowski, M.J. (1990). "Security Relations Between the United States and Iran, 1953-1978," p. 150

Iran, 1953-64. CIA station chiefs in regular contact with Shah and working level liaison relationship with SAVAK established by 5-man training team and smaller unit in SAVAK HQs for several years after training team left. CIA and SAVAK exchanged intelligence including information on Tudeh party. Gasiorowski, M.J. (1990). "Security relations between the United States and Iran, 1953-1978," pp. 255-56

Iran, 1953. CIA prepared an arrest list for the overthrow operation. Copeland, M. (1989). The Game Player, p. 190

Iran, 1953. U.S. Army colonel working for CIA under cover of military attache worked to organize and train intelligence organization for Shah. Trained on domestic security, interrogation. Primary purpose of (Bakhtiar's intelligence unit later to become SAVAK) to eliminate threats to Shah. Gasiorowski, M.J. (1990). "Security Relations Between the United States and Iran, 1953-1978" p. 150

Iran, 1954. Year after coup American cryptographic experts and CIA agent played important part in rooting out conspiracy army officers linked to Tudeh Party. Kwitny, J. (1984). Endless Enemies, p. 165

Iran. During Shah's reign, thousands people killed. Many killed at Shah's directive. Rafizadeh, M. (1987). Witness, p. 134

Iran, 1983. CIA identifies to Iranian government 200 leftists who were then executed. The Nation, 12/13/1986, p. 660

Iran, 1983. In 1983, when the Tudeh party was closed down, the CIA gave the Khomeni government a list of USSR KGB agents operating in Iran. Two hundred suspects were executed, 18 USSR diplomats expelled and Tudeh party leaders imprisoned. Washington Post, 1/13/1987, A1,8

Iran, 1983. To curry favor with Khomeni, the CIA gave his government a list of USSR KGB agents and collaborators operating in Iran. The Khomeni regime then executed 200 suspects and closed down the communist Tudeh party. Khomeni then expelled 18 USSR diplomats, and imprisoned the Tudeh leaders. Washington Post, 11/19/1986, A28

Iraq: Watch List

Iraq, 1963. CIA supplied lists of communists to Baath party group that led coup so that communists could be rounded up and eliminated. Cockburn, A. and Cockburn, L. (1991). Dangerous Liaison, p. 130

Israel: Death Squads

Israel. Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir headed a special hit squad during his ten years in Mossad. Shamir headed the assassination unit from 1955-64 that carried out attacks on perceived enemies and suspected Nazi war criminals. Shamir recruited former members of the Stern Gang. Washington Times, 7/4/1992, A8

Israel, 1992. Article, "How Israeli Commandos Are Waging an Undercover War In Occupied Territories." In January 1992, Israeli army launched all-out offensive to end "Red Intifadeh."

Undercover units "Arabized" produced a rash of deaths under controversial circumstances leading to claims commando units are death squads. Since Intifadeh began in 1987, 775 Palestinians killed; 680 more slain by their brethren mostly for collaboration. Human-rights organizations contend Sayarot shoot first and ask questions later. Time 8/31/1992, pp. 49-50

Israel, 1992. Israel's assassination squad, Duvdevan or Cherry has killed one of its own by mistake. Intelligence Newsletter, 7/23/1992, p. 5

Israel, 1992. Israeli army had discharged commander of undercover unit for issuing orders to shoot at Palestine activists. Unit code-named Samson has had three commanders fired or placed on trial within three years. More than 30 Palestinians killed this year by undercover troops, who usually dress as Arabs. Washington Post, 8/26/1992, A14

Israel, Honduras, 1981-89. In 1981 Leo Gleser, "co-owner" of International Security and Defense Systems (ISDS) — a leading Israeli "security" firm (Israeli Foreign Affairs 2/1987, 5/1987, /1987, 2/1988, 3/1989) identified repeatedly as an Israeli entity — began building Battalion 316, a unit of Honduran military intelligence which disappeared, tortured, then killed its victims. Honduran General Walter Lopez Reyes who C-I-C Honduran armed forces 1984-86, said "we had Israeli advisers in Special Forces. They seconded to Special Forces by Israeli mod, although they came officially as non-governmental." Their front [was] they [were] training security groups but [they really gave] special operations courses on how take over buildings, planes, hostages...Contras also taking courses... coordination between them and CIA. Israeli Foreign Affairs, 4/1989, p. 1,4

Israel, South Africa, 1986-91. Israel trained members of Inkatha hit squads aimed at African National Congress, a disillusioned former leader of Zulu organization has revealed. Israeli Foreign Affairs, 2/20/1992, p. 3

Israel. Ranks as fifth largest exporter of arms in world, according CIA estimates, and has become essential element global counterinsurgency business. "Hit lists" used by death squads in Guatemala have been computerized with Israeli assistance and Uzi machine guns the standard weapon of death squads. Covert Action Information Bulletin (Quarterly), Summer 1988, p. 5

Italy: Watch List

Italy, 1950-59. All Italian "SIFAR" counterespionage officers collected biographies on every deputy and senator. List increased to include Ecclesiastics: 45,000 dossiers on them alone, 157,000 altogether, 30,000 dealing with Italians in world of business and industry. Drop copies went to CIA. De Lorenzo's outfit to become a tool for CIA. Tompkins, P. (Unpublished manuscript). Strategy of Terror, pp. 8-12

Italy, 1959-67. Carabinieri drew up plan Piano Solo — for paramilitary to intervene in order to restore public order. Secret services had massive program of surveillance of Italian political and business figures. This partly intended to identify left-wing suspects who would be rounded up and imprisoned in concentration camps on Sardinia. Investigation revealed creation of personal intelligence dossiers began in 1959 and 157,000 files amassed. SIFAR (military intelligence) dossiers emphasized unfavorable significance. SIFAR dossiers routinely deposited at CIA HQs. SIFAR planed microphones in Papal apartments and President's Rome residence. Operation ordered by de Lorenzo at request of CIA station chief Colby. Some years earlier Rome CIA station chief Thomas Karamessines had asked General de Lorenzo, then head of SIFAR, for dossiers on [left-leaning] politicians and in particular for Moro's circle of collaborators. Willan, P. (1991). Puppetmasters, pp. 35-7

Italy, 1960-70. General de Lorenzo, whose SIFAR became SID, implemented new Gladio project to neutralize subversive elements. Known as parallel SID, it reached into nearly every institution. Group set up at request of Americans and NATO. Knights of Malta, as well as freemasonry, and its most notorious lodge — Propaganda Due, or P-2, far more influential. Licio Gelli, a knight. Joined U.S. Army's CIC. To ferret out dissidents, they prepared watch lists on thousands. 157,000 files found in Ministry of Interior. CIA obtained duplicates. Covert Action Information Bulletin (Quarterly), Summer 1994, p. 24

Italy, 1960-70. Operation Solo — a planned coup against a leftist government did not occur — but it was based on Operation Gladio. Giovanni de Lorenzo, as chief of secret services, compiled dossiers, including tapes and photos, on some 150,000 people — priests, politicians and unionists. He drew up plan to arrest many politicians, take over radio and TV, seize offices and newspapers of left-wing parties. De Lorenzo was organizing a duplicate of Operation Gladio in case left gained too much power. "Statewatch" compilation, filed June 1994

Latin America: Death Squads

Latin America, labor. AIFLD collected detailed information about Latin American labor leaders under pretext surveys necessary for AID-financed worker's housing projects. AIFLD able obtain personal and political history union members, with address and photos. Given CIA role in Chile, Uruguay and Brazil coups, among others, it probable this information passed to military regimes and their secret police. DL p. 238 from Lernoux, P. (1982). Cry of the People. pp. 212, 220

Liaison, 1960. Target lists maintained by all Western Hemisphere division stations. Maintain in case local government asks for assistance in preventive detention of dangerous persons. Agee, P. (1975). Inside the Company: CIA Diary, p. 114

Latin America. CIA organizes right wing terrorist organizations that attack and assassinate leftist politicians and others without implicating foreign governments. Groups include "La Mano Blanco" and "Ojo Por Ojo" (Guatemala), "La Banda" (Dominican republic), and "Death Squad" (Brazil). Counterspy, 3/1973, p. 4

Latin America. CIA trained assassination groups such as Halcones in Mexico, the Mano Blanca in Guatemala, and the Escuadron de la Muerte in Brazil. NACLA (magazine re Latin America) 8/1974, p. 11

Latin America, 1953-84. The activities of the death squads, formed under CIA sponsorship in 1954 Are loosely controlled by an international organization known as La Mano Blanco (the White Hand). The front group is the CAL, Latin American Anti-communist Federation, the Latin American affiliate of the World Anti-communist League. Jack Anderson, Washington Post, 1/13/1984

Latin America. Terrorist groups created in most countries. Groups such as "La Mano Blanco" attack and assassinate leftist politicians and others feared by military governments, doing so without implicating police or military. CIA implicated in attempts to organize the right into terrorist organizations. Counterspy, __/1973, p. 4

Latin America, 1960-95. Colonel Alpirez accused killer of American innkeeper and guerrilla leader, graduated from School of Americas in 1989. Other notable alumni include: Manuel Noriega and Omar Torrijos, former Panamanian strongmen; Roberto D'Aubuisson, leader of Salvadoran death squads; Roberto Viola and Leopoldo Galtieri, leaders of argentine dirty war; Michael Francois, former Haitian police chief; 19 of 27 Salvadoran officers cited for

murder of six Jesuit priests; 10 of 12 Salvadoran officers involved in El Mozote massacre; 105 of 247 Colombian officers cited for human rights violations in 1992; and, former dictators of Bolivia, Ecuador, and Peru. Time. 4/10/1995, p. 20

Latin America, 1976. An Argentinean told Scherrer, legal attache (FBI) Santiago, that Operation Condor, a nascent program among military intelligence services of some Latin American countries designed to locate and eliminate one another's fugitive terrorists and exiled dissidents. Ambitious leader of Chilean DINA trying to institutionalize process. Branch, T. and Proper, E. (1983). Labyrinth, p. 123

Latin America, Operation Condor, Paraguay, 1970-92. 12/1992 a Paraguayan judge in a police station found documentary history of decades of repression and U.S. intelligence cooperation with Paraguay and other regional dictatorships. Archives detail fates of hundreds, possibly thousands, of Latin Americans secretly kidnapped by right-wing regimes of the 1970s. Paper trail revealing elusive conspiracy among security services of Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Paraguay and Uruguay to eliminate foes without regard to borders. Sketchy outlines of Operation Condor, can be partially filled in. Some of documents already disappeared. Finders had unearthed jumbled mountain of papers outlining police and military intelligence activities during recently overthrown Stroessner regime. HQs of Paraguayan technical police revealed more documents. 4 tons records. Data confirmed arrest and killing of politicians and exchange of prisoners with Argentina, Chile and Uruguay. Discovered documents a bombshell that led to arrest of some of Stroessner's old regime. Southern Cone repression killed 50,000, disappeared 30,000 — the majority in Argentina and 400,000 imprisoned. U.S. gave inspiration, financing and technical assistance for repression. CIA's technical services division (TSD), provided electrical torture equipment. Covert Action Information Bulletin (Quarterly), Fall 1994, pp. 7-13

Latin America, 1993. James Carroll wrote editorial about U.S. Army's School of Americas in Fort Benning. It is "the U.S. school that teaches militaries how to torture." Among renowned alumni are various Latin American strongmen, including dictators in Bolivia, Argentina, El Salvador and Panama. In Peru 6 of army officers charged with recent murders of 9 students were School of Americas alumni. In Honduras, 4 of the high-ranking officers who helped create "Battalion 316" death squad graduated from the school. In Columbia, the list of officers designated by human rights organizations as worst offenders reads like an honor roll from Fort Benning. In El Salvador, 2 of 3 officers cited for the assassination of Archbishop Romero, 3 of 5 convicted of killing 3 Maryknoll nuns and their lay associate, and 19 of the 26 officers implicated by United Nations. "Truth Commission" investigation of murder of Jesuits, were graduates. "For decades alumni of the School of Americas have helped fill morgues and mass graves of an entire continent." Colonel Louis Michel Francois has been most closely linked to Haiti death squads, and he is an alumni of the school just as is General Raoul Cedars one of those CIA agents. Z Magazine, 2/1994, p. 24

Mexico: Death Squads

Mexico, 1957-89. The Mexican DFS (Federal Security Directorate) like many Western-hemisphere intelligence organizations was creation of CIA. DFS has state of the art computer and records systems. Through DFS CIA able to keep tabs on all embassies in Mexico City. DFS works closely with U.S. In the suppression of leftists and political parties. In early 1970s, Nazar created the Brigada Blanca, a right-wing death squad that killed hundreds, probably thousands of Mexican students and political activists. Zacaris Osorio Cruz, a member of death squad, testified in Canada that, between 1977-82, he part of team that killed between 60-150 people. Penthouse, 12/1989

Mexico, 1977-89. U.S. looked the other way when Nazar, head of DFS used his infallible (interrogation) techniques on behalf American agencies while he carried out hundreds,

perhaps thousands of political executions of Mexican leftists and political dissidents. DFS (Federal Security Directorate) administering drug traffic. Penthouse, 12/1989

Nicaragua: Watch List

Joseph Adams, a former Marine intelligence officer, who served as chief of security for Aldolfo Calero, helped maintain a list of civilians marked for assassination when Contra forces entered Nicaragua. The Progressive, 3/1987, p. 24

Nicaragua: Death Squads

Nicaragua, 1983-89. Enrique Bermudez, a Contra leader, said in Contra raids on economic targets in northern Nicaragua, particularly coffee plantations and farming cooperatives, any resistance brought brutal retribution. Commandantes in field authorized to select those to die. Bermudez ordered prisoners to have throats cut rather than waste bullets. Terrell, J., and Martz, R. (1992). Disposable Patriot, p. 149

Nicaragua, 1985-89. "Death squad" reports re Sandinistas first circulated by the CIA-funded Puebla Institute in 1991 as coming from the UN and OAS. When checked out, this proved to be not true. Unclassified, 9/1992, p. 14

Nicaragua, circa 1940-79. Under name Anti-Communist League Nicaragua. Conservative estimates say 30,000 died four decades prior 1978-79 civil war. Lernoux, P. (1982). Cry of the People. pp. 81, 94

Norway: Watch List

Norway, 1947-90. Operation Gladio, formed in 1947, kept track of communists and became part of intelligence service in 1948. Norwegian branch exposed in 1978, when an arms cache discovered. "Statewatch" compilation filed June 1994, p. 12

Panama: Watch List

Panama, 1989-90. U.S. says 90 prisoners now held in Panama. Most of those detained had been picked up by U.S. Forces based on wanted lists compiled by U.S. and Panamanian authorities. Washington Post, 1/19/1990, A16

Panama, 1989. Several hundred people on list Endarra government seeks to detain. They arrested by U.S. troops. Most political activists and labor leaders were wanted. The Nation, 1/29/1990, p. 115

Paraguay: Watch List

Paraguay, 1972-83. The Paraguayan government expelled an author and released a document supplied by the U.S. Embassy. The document, marked secret, includes the author among a list of Paraguayans said to have visited the USSR bloc. Washington Post 2/5/1983, A1,21

Philippines: Death Squads

Philippines. Article "Death Squads in the Philippines," by Doug Cunningham. Covert Action Information Bulletin (Quarterly), Winter 1988 pp. 22-3

Philippines. Military used hunter killer unit called scout rangers to find enemy and either attack or report back to battalion combat teams. Blaufarb, D.S. (1977). The Counterinsurgency Era, p. 28

Philippines. Probable U.S. support for vigilante death squads in the Philippines. Used in coordination with other programs making up a total low intensity conflict profile. National Reporter, Fall 1987, pp. 24-30

Philippines, 1950-54. Military man who helped Lansdale was Charles Bohannan and Lansdale's chief Filipino associate was Colonel Napoleon Valeriano whose "skull squadrons" beheaded suspected Huks. Karnow, S. (1989). In Our Image, p. 350

Philippines, 1969-83. Marcos' land reform failed and he approved creation of "Monkees" a group used to intimidate and even murder Marcos' rivals. Karnow, S. (1989). In Our Image. p.378

Philippines, 1973-83. In Philippines 1,166 persons were killed from 1972-83. Human rights groups say most of victims were opponents of President Marcos. Washington Post, 4/12/1984, A21

Philippines, 1986-87. "Vigilante Terror" a report of CIA-inspired death squads in the Philippines. National Reporter, Fall 1987, pp. 24-31

Philippines, 1986. See chapter "Direct U.S. Role in Counterinsurgency." includes psywar operations, vigilante and death squads. USIA anti-communist campaign of distributing films and written materials. Film "Amerika" shown. Use of Asian-American Free Labor Institute Operations. In 1985, AAFLI spent up to $4 million on organizational efforts, the money coming from the National Endowment for Democracy (NED). Bello, W. (1987). U.S. Sponsored Low Intensity Conflict in the Philippines

Philippines, March 1986. Reagan signs finding increasing CIA involvement in Philippine counterinsurgency operations. New Aquino government is allegedly perpetrating a purge of opposition, carried out by more than 50 death squads. Ramsey Clark, who investigated death squad activity in 1987, wrote in June that "the victims of vigilante violence are overwhelmingly poor farmers, workers, slum dwellers, and others who are pushing for significant land reform, wage increases and protection workers' rights, as well as those who oppose U.S. military bases." Upsurge in death squad activities are coincident with increased CIA aid and was preceded by visit to Philippines by Maj. Gen. John Singlaub. The Nation, 9/19/1987, pp. 259-60

Puerto Rico: Watch List

Puerto Rico. FBI has institutionalized repression. It created "subversive" lists with names of more than 150,000 "independentistas" who often find themselves thrown out of work. FBI agents organized and trained death squads within the Puerto Rican police department NACLA (magazine re Latin America), 8/1990, p. 5

Puerto Rico: Death Squads

Puerto Rico, 1978. "Puerto Rico's Death Squad Requiem on Cerro Maravilla: the Police Murders in Puerto Rico and the U.S. Government Cover-up." A book by Manuel Suarez reviewed in the Progressive, 12/1988, pp. 40-42

Russia: Watch List

Russia, 1994. FBI to open Moscow office with an eye on nuclear trafficking. FBI has about 20 posts abroad at U.S. Embassies with its agents serving as legal attaches. They range in size from one agent to as many as eight, plus support staff. FBI director Freeh said the FBI working to set up joint police/intelligence data base with authorities in Russia and Germany. Washington Times, 5/26/1994, A3

South Africa: Watch List

South Africa, 1962. A tip from a paid CIA informant led to 1962 arrest of Nelson Mandela leader of the African National Congress. A CIA officer claimed "we have turned Mandela over to the South African security branch." Washington Post, 6/11/1990, A18

South Africa: Death Squads

South Africa. Article, "South African Death Squad Plot: A Missing Piece to a Puzzle the Media Won't Solve," by Jane Hunter. Extra, 11/1992, p. 26 South Africa. See article "South African Death Squads." Covert Action Information bulletin (Quarterly) Summer 1990, pp. 63-66

South Africa, 1980-89. Details of South Africa's death squads by a former police Captain Dirk Coetzee. Group tracked and killed ANC activists in Swaziland, Botswana and Lesotho. Newsweek, 11/27/1989, p. 56

South Africa, 1980-90. Apartheid's fiercest warriors in 1980s were South Africa's army special forces, police force known as Koevoet (crowbar), and Portuguese-speaking "buffalo" battalion who ran a campaign of assassination and sabotage against the African National Congress. Newsweek, 9/14/1992, p. 45

South Africa, 1991-92. 75 COSATU (labor union) members killed during past two years by security forces. Many other attacks. Briarpatch magazine (Canada), 10/1992, pp. 55-6

South Africa, 1992. Slaughter in South Africa. Newsweek 9/21/1992, p. 57

South America: Watch List

South America, 1970-79. U.S. Legal attache Buenos Aires, FBI agent Robert Scherrer, sent cable to D.C. Describing operation. Operation Condor the code-name for collection, exchange and storage intelligence re leftists, communists and Marxists. Established between cooperating intelligence services in South America to eliminate Marxist activities. Operation provided for joint operation against targets in member countries...third and secret phase of operation involves formation of special teams from member countries who travel anywhere in world to carry out sanctions up to assassination against terrorists from member countries. Special team from Operation Condor could be sent to locate and surveil target. When located, a second team would be sent to carry out sanction. 1979 Senate Report, based on CIA files, says "such a phase three operation planned in 1974 and planned on killing 3 European leftists" — one Carlos. Plot foiled when CIA discovered it and warned host countries — France and Portugal. U.S. military officers sent under auspices of AID oversaw formation of technical police. One folder of archives has correspondence between Paraguayan ministers and U.S. Army Colonel Robert Thierry, who was serving as "public administration adviser," who supervised formation of the technical police. Letters from FBI agent Scherrer advising Paraguayan police re targets. CIA also worked with Paraguayans. Deputy DCI, Vernon Walters, visited country in 1976 who apparently approved abortive effort to get false passports for 2 Chilean DINA agents — Armando Fernandez and Michael Townley — who en route to U.S. To assassinate Orlando Letelier. The case of Eugenio Berios. Covert Action Information Bulletin (Quarterly) 12, 57, 8, 9

South America: Death Squads

South America, 1976. Letelier killed by right wing Cuban exiles called "Gusanos" who are paid and trained by CIA and "Chilean Gestapo" DINA. Gusanos regularly engage in terrorism against Cuba and Latin American and Caribbean countries. Tactics include blowing up airplanes, embassies, fishing boats, and kidnappings. Gusanos connected with police of other right wing governments such as Venezuela. Certain gusano operations directed by CIA; Other unilateral operations of DINA. Counterspy, 12/1976, p. 10

Syria: Watch List

Syria, 1949. Following CIA coup of March 1949 CIA officer reported over "400 Commies" arrested. Middle East Journal 57

Syria, 1949. The Husni Za'im coup of 30 March result of guarantee CIA that once firmly in power, the U.S. would give de facto recognition with de jure to follow in a few days and pointed out targets to be seized. Gave him a list of all politicians who might be able to rally resistance. Copeland, M. (1989). The Game Player, p. 94

Thailand: Death Squads

Thailand, 1965. Death squads. Lobe, T. (1977). United States national security policy and aid to the Thailand police 67-70

Thailand, 1973-76. General Saiyut Koedphon, deputy head of CSOC and close ally of CIA, admitted that CIA was collaborating with a variety of Thai security agencies, including CSOC. Similarly, deputy director of police, Withun Yasawat, said he was receiving CIA advice and reports as late as 1974. American indoctrination of CSOC and border patrol police during 1960's produced U.S. desired objectives. "Nawaophon" created ISOC officers who in turn has close contacts with CIA, employed covert tactics to search out "subversive elements" within the Thai population. Counterspy, Summer 1980, p. 14

Thailand, 1973-76. The Krathin Daeng (Red Guars), were groups of rightist students with police support that had over 100,000 members including government employees, soldiers, policemen, etc. Group received support and assistance from the internal security command (where CIA had a presence) and the Thai Santiban aka Special Branch. The Red Guars implicated in numerous bombings, killings, shooting and harassment of labor leaders, peasant leaders, etc. Indochina Resource Center Study, 1/1977

Thailand, 1976. A high-ranking official of Seni Pramoj government told a foreign visitor few weeks before October 6 coup, both Nawapon and the Red Gaurs were being financed by CIA. Counterspy, 12/1976, p. 52

Thailand, 1976. Over 10,000 students, professors, political figures, labor and farm leaders arrested since coup. U.S. military aid increased. New junta used CIA-trained forces to crush student demonstrators during coup. 2 right-wing terrorist squads suspected for assassinations tied directly to CIA operations. Bulletin of Concerned Asian Scholars, v9 #3, 9/1977, p. 2

Thailand, 1976. Red Gaurs, an organization of the extreme right, staged provocations against progressive students and assassinations of activists of farmers' federation of Thailand. The number of assassinations by right wingers soared in April 1976 during parliamentary elections. Defense minister Pramarn Adireksan, leader of right wing Thai National party,

openly proclaimed the slogan "the right kill the left." Syrokonski. (1983). International Terrorism and the CIA, p. 117-118

Thailand, 1976. Thai border police, element of police most involved in counterinsurgency and which CIA concentrated most of its efforts, carried out an assault by fire against essentially unarmed students, killing at least 100. Counterspy, 12/1976, p. 52

Turkey: Watch List

Turkey, 1971. Coup carried out by counter-guerrilla, the CIA, the Turkey military and Turkish military intelligence (MIT). CIA solely interested in protecting American interests. CIA assisted MIT in 1960-69 in drafting plans for mass arrests of opposition figures similar to the pattern followed in Thailand, Indonesia and Greece. In single night generals ordered 4000 professors, students, teachers and retired officers arrested. They tortured. Counterspy, 4/1982, p. 25

Uruguay: Watch List

Uruguay. CIA agent associated with death squads. Every CIA station maintained subversive control watch list of most important left wing activists. Gave names families and friends. Frankovich, A. (1980). On Company Business. TV transcript, 5/9/1980, pp. 51-3

Uruguay, liaison, 1964. Biographical data and photos. Uruguay has national voter registration that effective identity card system. From liaison service CIA station gets full name, date and place of birth, parents names, address, place of work, etc. and id photos. Information invaluable for surveillance operations, for subversive control watch list and for a variety of other purposes. CID-361

Uruguay: Death Squads

Uruguay, 1970-72. CIA operations officer used cover of AID public safety advisor to help set up Department of Information and Intelligence (DII). DII served as a cover for death squad. Counterspy, 5/1979, p. 10

USSR: Watch List

USSR, 1990 KGB Chairman Vladimir Kryuchkov said KGB to protect against anti-Communist forces. Said western intelligence exploiting current instability in USSR. Certain radical movements being masterminded by foreign support. Certain groups had written "blacklists" of people who must be neutralized. Washington Post, 12/12/1990, A18,20

USSR, 1990. KGB's Kryuchkov accuses CIA and other western intelligence agencies of gathering information on workers' movements. Washington Post, 12/23/1990, A1,22

USSR, East Germany, 1949-57. League of Free Jurists (UFJ) kept a blacklist of offenders against justice — particularly lawyers and police — and published their activities. Named were marked men, whether they came to West as refugees or as accredited representatives of East Germans. Hagan, L. (1969). The Secret War for Europe, p. 200

USSR, Iran, 1982. Vladimir Kuzichkin, a senior KGB officer in Tehran, defected to the British. CIA had a sharing agreement with MI6 and became privy to contents of two trunks full of documents. From those documents CIA prepared name lists of more than one hundred people, mostly Iranians, working as secret agents in Iran for the USSR. Casey allowed this list be handed to the Iranians — who executed them. Persico, J. (1991). Casey, p. 301

Vietnam: Watch List

Vietnam, 1965-68. U.S./Government of Vietnam create list of active NLF for assassination. After 1968 Tet offensive, names centralized to Phoenix coordinators. Collect names of tens of thousands NLF suspects. Military operations such as My Lai use Phoenix intelligence. By 1973, Phoenix generates 300,000 political prisoners in South Vietnam. Counterspy, May 1973, p. 22

Vietnam, 1965-70. Details re Vietnam. From 1965-68 U.S. and Saigon intelligence services maintained an active list of Viet Cong cadre marked for assassination. Phoenix program for 1969 called for "neutralizing" 1800 a month. About one third of Viet Cong targeted for arrest had been summarily killed. Security committees established in provincial interrogation centers to determine fate of Viet Cong suspects, outside of judicial controls. Green Berets and Navy Seals most common recruits for Phoenix program. Green Beret Detachment B-57 provided administrative cover for other intelligence units. One was Project Cherry, tasked to assassinate Cambodian officials suspected of collaborating with North Vietnamese, KGB. Another was Project Oak targeted against South Vietnamese suspected collaborators. They controlled by Special Assistant for Counterinsurgency and Special Activities, which worked with CIA outside of General Abrams's control. Stein. J. (1992). A Murder In Wartime, pp. 360-1

Vietnam, 1967-73 CIA developed Phoenix program in 1967 to neutralize: kill, capture or make defect Viet Cong infrastructure. Viet Cong infrastructure means civilians suspected of supporting Communists. Targeted civilians not soldiers. Phoenix also called Phung Hoang by Vietnamese. Due process totally nonexistent. South Vietnamese who appeared on black lists could be tortured, detained for 2 years without trial or killed. Valentine, D. (1990). The Phoenix Program, p. 13

Vietnam, 1967-73 District Intelligence Operations Coordination Center (DIOCC). Dien Ban center a model for all of Phoenix. Bldg 10' x 40'. Manned by two U.S. Soldiers, 2 Census Grievance, one Rural Development cadre, and one Special Branch. DIOCC intelligence clearinghouse to review, collate, and disseminate information. Immediate local reaction. Americans kept files of sources, Viet Cong infrastructure and order of battle. Reaction forces 100 police, 1 PRU unit, guides from census grievance. Marines screened civilian detainees using informants and DIOCC's blacklist. Valentine, D. (1990). The Phoenix Program, p.126

Vietnam, 1968-69. Until late 1968, Saigon had run a program under which 500,000 ID cards were issued. Viet Cong made fake ones and many stolen. Viet Cong during Tet assigned teams to go door-to-door to collect them. Saigon reissued cards in 10/1968. By 1 May 1969, number of cards issued was 1.5 million. Adams, S. (1994). War of Numbers, p. 181

Vietnam, 1968. Phoenix program quota of 1800 neutralizations per month. Viet Cong Infrastructure System (VCIS) fed 3000 names Viet Cong infrastructure into computer at Combined Intelligence Center political order of battle section. Beginning of computerized blacklist. In Saigon DIA, FBI and CIA used computers. Until 1970 computerized blacklist a unilateral American operation. Valentine, D. (1990). The Phoenix Program, 259

Vietnam, 1968. U.S. advisors worked with Government of Vietnam counterparts to establish a list of those who were active with the NLF and who were vulnerable to assassination. Counterspy, 5/1973, p. 21

Vietnam: Death Squads

Vietnam. Counterterror teams aka Provincial Reconnaissance Units (PRU). Six or dozen men carried out carefully planned forays, capturing or killing identified communists. Blaufarb, D.S. (1977). The Counterinsurgency Era, pp. 210-11

Vietnam, 1960-93. Montagnards recruited in early 1960s by Special Forces to fight Viet Cong. Did not surrender until 1992, when they yielded weapons to UN forces in Cambodia and brought to U.S. About 600 live in North Carolina. Paul Campbell, former SF who first American to recruit them. Kay Reibold head of Vietnam highlands assistance project. Montagnards live in small apartments around Raleigh with low-paying jobs. In 10/1961 Campbell, then a SF Sergeant, sent by CIA to recruit Montagnards. They to form village security, but soon being used for long-range reconnaissance and in highly mobile strike forces that hunted Viet Cong for weeks at a time. "We killed many Vietnamese." Article by W. Booth. Washington Post, 12/27/1993

Vietnam, 1965. CIA station helped create census grievance units. CIA funded, trained and guided counter terror teams who per Chief of Station de Silva, were "to bring danger and death to Viet Cong functionaries." Corn, D. (1994). Blond Ghost: Ted Shackley and the CIA's Crusades, p. 175

Vietnam, 1966-71. Phoenix operation designed to help U.S. military reach crossover point, where dead and wounded exceeded Viet Cong's ability to field replacements. In April 1967, President Johnson announced formation of Civil Operations and Revolutionary Development Support (CORDS) for pacification. Robert Komer as deputy commander of MACV-CORDS. CORDS budget about $4 billion from 1968-71. CORDS the management structure for pacification programs. Personnel both military and civilian. By 1971, 3000 servicemen, advisers to ARVN, placed under CORDS. 1200 civilians by 1971. U.S. AID responsible for material aid. State and USIA also provided personnel. But CIA played the crucial role. CORDS reinstated civic action teams under name Revolutionary Development cadre. RD program formed teams of 59 South Vietnamese, divided into 3 11-man security squads and 25 civic action cadres. Teams to spend 6 months in a village to fulfill "Eleven criteria and 98 works for pacification." 1. Annihilation of ...cadre; 2. Annihilation of wicked village dignitaries; etc. System placed 40,000 two-way radios in villages. Land reform failed. (Photos of Phoenix propaganda material). Teams helped create Regional and Popular Forces (RF/PFs). Ruff-puffs, suffered high casualties. They represented half of South Vietnamese government forces, they had 55-66% of casualties. They inflicted 30% of Communist casualties. Underground paramilitary effort called Phoenix, which included a "census grievance," stay-behind. He actually a spy. All information fed into intelligence coordination and exploitation program. Vietnamese at Komer's request set up staff that, with CIA, was responsible for coordinating intelligence reports on Viet Cong Infrastructure. Information from census grievance, military, police reports. paramilitary units, including CIA's Provincial Reconnaissance Units and ruff-puffs. Arrestees — those not killed when captured — taken to Provincial Interrogation Centers (PIC). Also regional prisons and a national center. All financed by CIA. Problems of coordination and jealousy. Numerical quotas created saying how many VCI to be eliminated each month. Torture used in questioning. Manning, R., (ed), (1988). War in the Shadows: the Vietnam Experience, pp. 55-65

Vietnam, 1966. In 1966 recycled counter terrorists called Provincial Reconnaissance Units (PRU) and managed by CIA officer in CORDS RDC/O Office. Valentine, D. (1990). The Phoenix Program, p. 117

Vietnam, 1968. CIA issued two handbooks in June 1968. One "the Viet Cong Key Organization From Central Level Down to Village and Hamlet Levels." Second a manual of procedures from Saigon to DIOCCs. One report said "as DIOCCs and PIOCCs have refined data bases, gained experience, and mounted more operations against targeted individuals, the neutralization rate... over 1000 per month for last 4 months." Gia Dinh "has more than

quadrupled monthly rate of killed, captured and rallied." Valentine, D. (1990). The Phoenix Program, p. 190

Vietnam, 1971. William E. Colby on July 19, 1971, before Senate Subcommittee testified that CIA's Operation Phoenix had killed 21,587 Vietnamese citizens between January 1968 and May 1971. Counterspy, December 1978, p. 6

Phoenix Rising

Tucked away in the Iraqi appropriation was $3 billion for a new paramilitary unit. Vietnam similarities?

Robert Dreyfuss
January 1, 2004

With the 2004 electoral clock ticking amid growing public concern about U.S. casualties and chaos in Iraq, the Bush administration's hawks are upping the ante militarily. To those familiar with the CIA's Phoenix assassination program in Vietnam, Latin America's death squads or Israel's official policy of targeted murders of Palestinian activists, the results are likely to look chillingly familiar.

The Prospect has learned that part of a secret $3 billion in new funds—tucked away in the $87 billion Iraq appropriation that Congress approved in early November—will go toward the creation of a paramilitary unit manned by militiamen associated with former Iraqi exile groups. Experts say it could lead to a wave of extrajudicial killings, not only of armed rebels but of nationalists, other opponents of the U.S. occupation and thousands of civilian Baathists—up to 120,000 of the estimated 2.5 million former Baath Party members in Iraq.

"They're clearly cooking up joint teams to do Phoenix-like things, like they did in Vietnam," says Vincent Cannistraro, former CIA chief of counter terrorism. Ironically, he says, the U.S. forces in Iraq are working with key members of Saddam Hussein's now-defunct intelligence agency to set the program in motion. "They're setting up little teams of Seals and Special Forces with teams of Iraqis, working with people who were former senior Iraqi intelligence people, to do these things," Cannistraro says.

The plan is part of a last-ditch effort to win the war before time runs out politically. Driving the effort are U.S. neoconservatives and their allies in the Pentagon and Vice President Dick Cheney's office, who are clearly worried about America's inability to put down the Iraqi insurgency with time to spare before November. They are concerned that President Bush's political advisers will overrule the national-security team and persuade the president to pull the plug on Iraq. So, going for broke, they've decided to launch an intensified military effort combined with a radical new counterinsurgency program.

The hidden $3 billion will fund covert ("black") operations disguised as an Air Force classified program. According to John Pike, an expert on classified military budgets at www.globalsecurity.org, the cash, spread over three years, is likely being funneled directly to the CIA, boosting that agency's estimated $4 billion a year budget by fully 25 percent. Operations in Iraq will get the bulk of it, with some money going to Afghanistan. The number of CIA officers in Iraq, now 275, will increase

significantly, supplemented by large numbers of the U.S. military's elite counterinsurgency forces. A chunk of those secret funds, according to Mel Goodman, a former CIA analyst, will to go to restive tribal sheikhs, especially in Sunni-dominated central Iraq. "I assume there are CIA people going around with bags of cash," says Goodman.

But the bulk of the covert money will support U.S. efforts to create a lethal, and revenge-minded, Iraqi security force. "The big money would be for standing up an Iraqi secret police to liquidate the resistance," says Pike. "And it has to be politically loyal to the United States."

Unable to quell the resistance to the U.S. occupation, the Pentagon is revamping its intelligence and special-operations task force in Iraq, a classified unit commanded by an Air Force brigadier general. It's also pouring money into the creation of an Iraqi secret police staffed mainly by gunmen associated with members of the puppet Iraqi Governing Council. Those militiamen are linked to Ahmad Chalabi's Iraqi National Congress (inc), the Kurdish peshmerga ("facing death") forces and Shiite paramilitary units, especially those of the Iran-backed Supreme Council for Islamic Revolution in Iraq. Technically illegal, these armed forces have been tolerated, even encouraged, by the Pentagon. Some of these militias openly patrol Baghdad and other cities, and in the south of Iraq, scores of Islamic-oriented paramilitary parties, with names like Revenge of God, are mobilized.

Because the militiamen who will make up the paramilitary force are largely from former Iraqi exile political groups, many have personal scores to settle. They will be armed with detailed lists, seized from government files, of Iraqi Baathists. Sporadic but persistent revenge killings against Hussein loyalists have already plagued Iraq. In Baghdad, Basra, and scores of smaller cities and towns, hundreds of former Iraqi officials and members of the Arab Baath Socialist Party have been gunned down, and the murderers have not been arrested or, in most cases, even pursued. Virtually signaling open season on ex-Baathists, Maj. Ian Poole, spokesman for the British forces controlling Basra, told The New York Times: "The fact is, these are former Baath Party officials. That makes it hard to protect them."

Chalabi's INC is promising to use its own intelligence teams to act forcefully against opponents of the United States. Chalabi, the darling of U.S. neoconservatives and the Pentagon's choice to be Iraq's first prime minister, is leading the charge for the "de-Baathification" of Iraq. When elements of the U.S. Army in Iraq seek to enlist the support of mid- and low-level Baath officials in trying to put a national bureaucracy back into place, Chalabi objects, often clashing with U.S. Army officers overseeing civil affairs.

Echoing Chalabi are various U.S. hawks and neo cons. "The Kurds and the Iraqi National Congress have excellent intelligence operations that we should allow them to exploit," read a Wall Street Journal editorial. "Especially to conduct counterinsurgency in the Sunni Triangle." More explicitly citing similar U.S. operations during the Vietnam War were Tom Donnelly, resident fellow at the American Enterprise Institute (AEI), and Gary Schmitt, executive director of the Project for a New American Century. Schmitt wrote a paper calling for a counterinsurgency effort modeled on the so-called COORDS program in Vietnam, an umbrella effort that included the notorious Phoenix assassinations. And, over lunch at a Washington eatery, I asked a neoconservative strategist how to deal with Iraq. "It's time for 'no more Mr. Nice Guy,'" he said. "All those people shouting, 'Down with America!' and dancing in the street when Americans are attacked? We have to kill them."

The U.S. occupation of Iraq is beginning to resemble Vietnam in more ways than one. American forces under attack are reportedly responding with indiscriminate fire, often killing combatants and innocents alike. Body counts are disputed, including one prominent instance in Samarra when U.S. forces claimed 54 Iraqi rebels killed but angry townspeople said that the dead numbered less than a dozen (and included women and children). Houses of suspected insurgents are being blown up. The wife and child of Izzat Ibrahim, a fugitive Iraqi official thought to be coordinating the insurgency, were seized and held hostage. The entire village of Auja, Hussein's hometown near Tikrit, was surrounded by barbed wire and turned into a strategic hamlet, with ID cards issued by U.S. forces needed to enter and exit it.

In early November, the Pentagon civilians ordered the U.S. military in Iraq to launch a heavily armed offensive against suspected strongholds of the resistance, using fighter bombers, laser-guided missiles, gunships and helicopters against targets of questionable importance, such as empty factories and warehouses. "It's an absolutely insane strategy," says Bob Boorstin, who oversees national-security policy for the Center for American Progress, a liberal think tank.

Until the offensive was launched, U.S. Army officers had been attempting, with uneven success, to rally local populations and adopt a hearts-and-minds approach. But in accordance with the neo cons' policy of no more Mr. Nice Guy, the Pentagon ordered the aggressive new stance that took shape as Operation Ivy Cyclone and Operation Iron Hammer. "I was astounded by the warmth and fuzziness of our generals," says Danielle Pletka, AEI vice president for foreign- and defense-policy studies, who just returned from a visit to Iraq. "Well, they got orders: 'You need to fight, and fight hard.' And it suddenly dawned on them that these were bad people, and maybe we need to go out and whomp the crap out of them."

Yet "whomping" is hardly a strategy, and in Iraq the United States is clearly flailing, with a trial-and-error approach that seems haphazard and rudderless. Underlying the neocons' worry is a nagging concern that Bush, who sided with the neo cons by launching the global war on terrorism and by going into Iraq, could abandon them for some form of cut-and-run strategy in order to protect his re-election efforts. Some say openly that the White House is "going wobbly," while others, like the AEI's Donnelly, believe in Bush's steadfastness but admit to having second thoughts. "For a neocon like me, having a member of the Bush family carrying the banner is a bit unnerving," says Donnelly, wryly.

But Boorstin, and many others in Washington, believe that Karl Rove, the White House's political guru, is losing patience with the bungled situation in Iraq. "I have no doubt that Karl Rove is ready to cut and run," says Boorstin. That sentiment is virtually seconded by Pletka, who maintains close contact with White House and Pentagon officials. "Some of the people around the president do want to cut and run," she says, "but not his foreign-policy advisers."

The latest offensives, combined with the counterinsurgency efforts, seem partly aimed at convincing Rove that there's no choice but to continue to gamble that the Iraqi venture will pay off. "This is an unusual president," says Richard Perle, an AEI fellow, member of the Defense Policy Board and perhaps the chief architect of U.S. Iraq policy. "He risked his presidency to do this in Iraq." But Perle is worried that politics could trump policy. "I hope it doesn't become a political issue, because that would encourage all of those who want us to fail, all of those arrayed against us," he says. "If we were to retreat, I shudder to think of the wave of terrorism it would unleash.

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El Salvador-style 'death squads' to be deployed by US against Iraq militants

FROM ROLAND WATSON IN WASHINGTON



John Negroponte was in Honduras when American money was used to train Contras to fight Nicaragua's Sandinista regime. (AL-RAYA/AP)

THE Pentagon is considering forming hit squads of Kurdish and Shia fighters to target leaders of the Iraqi insurgency in a strategic shift borrowed from the American struggle against left-wing guerrillas in Central America 20 years ago.

Under the so-called "El Salvador option", Iraqi and American forces would be sent to kill or kidnap insurgency leaders, even in Syria, where some are thought to shelter.

The plans are reported in this week's *Newsweek* magazine as part of Pentagon efforts to get US forces in Iraq on to the front foot against an enemy that is apparently getting the better of them.

Iyad Allawi, the interim Iraqi Prime Minister, was said to be one of the most vigorous supporters of the plan.

The Pentagon declined to comment, but one insider told *Newsweek*: "What everyone agrees is that we can't just go on as we are. We have to find a way to take the offensive against the insurgents. Right now, we are playing defence. And we are losing."

Hit squads would be controversial and would probably be kept secret.

The experience of the so-called "death squads" in Central America remains raw for many even now and helped to sully the image of the United States in the region.

Then, the Reagan Administration funded and trained teams of nationalist forces to neutralise Salvadorean rebel leaders and sympathisers. Supporters credit the policy with calming the insurgency, although it left a bitter legacy and stirred anti-American sentiment.

John Negroponte, the US Ambassador in Baghdad, had a front-row seat at the time as Ambassador to Honduras from 1981-85.

Death squads were a brutal feature of Latin American politics of the time. In Argentina in the 1970s and Guatemala in the 1980s, soldiers wore uniform by day but used unmarked cars by night to kidnap and kill those hostile to the regime or their suspected sympathisers.

In the early 1980s President Reagan's Administration funded and helped to train Nicaraguan contras based in Honduras with the aim of ousting Nicaragua's Sandinista regime. The Contras were equipped using money from illegal American arms sales to Iran, a scandal that could have toppled Mr Reagan.

It was in El Salvador that the United States trained small units of local forces specifically to target rebels.

The thrust of the Pentagon proposal in Iraq, according to *Newsweek*, is to follow that model and direct US special forces teams to advise, support and train Kurdish Peshmerga fighters and Shia militiamen to target leaders of the Sunni insurgency.

It is unclear whether the main aim of the missions would be to assassinate the rebels or kidnap them and take them away for interrogation. Any mission in Syria would probably be undertaken by US Special Forces.

Nor is it clear who would take responsibility for such a programme — the Pentagon or the Central Intelligence Agency. Such covert operations have traditionally been run by the CIA at arm's length from the administration in power, giving US officials the ability to deny knowledge of it.

The Pentagon refused to be drawn on the issue yesterday. "We don't discuss specific future operations or specific tactics," a spokeswoman said.

This week Gary Luck, a retired four-star general, will arrive in Iraq to review American policy in the country, looking particularly at the recruitment and training of Iraqi forces. The key to Washington's exit strategy is the ability of Iraqi forces to take over security roles. The general has been asked by Donald Rumsfeld, the US Defence Secretary, to deliver an " open-ended" review of how US aims can better be met.

His visit comes after two weeks of increased violence in Iraq in which scores of Iraqis and more than a dozen Americans have been killed in the run-up to the country's elections.

http://www.timesonline.co.uk/article/0,,11069-1433353,00.html

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Newsweek

Death-Squad Democracy

Are there parallels between El Salvador in the '80s and Iraq today? Maybe. But the 'lessons learned' by Washington are the wrong ones

WEB-EXCLUSIVE COMMENTARY
By Christopher Dickey
Newsweek
Updated: 6:42 p.m. ET Jan. 11, 2005

Jan. 11 - Among the many tools used to build and defend pro-American democracies, murder is among the trickiest. But murder—yes, let's insist on that word—is also quite common in the annals of nation-building, at least in my experience, and sometimes it's been very effective. Now we hear that some of the Bush administration's strategists are

talking about what they call "**The Salvador Option**", which seems to imply "death squads" (as the murderers were called in El Salvador and Guatemala) or "hit teams" (as they've been called in Israel).

Having watched the slaughter in El Salvador first hand during the early 1980s, having lost many friends and acquaintances to the butchers there—among them nuns, priests and an archbishop who will someday be sainted—and having been targeted myself, I have something of a personal interest in this notion. I'm not about to forget the bodies lying unclaimed in the streets, the families of the victims too afraid to pick them up lest they become targets as well. When I hear talk of a Salvador Option, I can't help but think about El Playón, a wasteland of volcanic rock that was one of the killers' favorite dumping grounds. I've never forgotten the sick-sweet stench of carnal refuse there, the mutilated corpses half-devoured by mongrels and buzzards, the hollow eyes of a human skull peering up through the loose-piled rocks, the hair fallen away from the bone like a gruesome halo.

Still, I'm prepared to admit that building friendly democracies sometimes has to be a cold-blooded business in the shadowland of moral grays that is the real world. The Reagan administration was just doing—or, more often, allowing to be done—whatever it took to defeat a largely Communist insurgency. I'm even prepared to believe that Arena, the political party founded by the late death squad leader, Roberto D'Aubuisson, has long since cleaned up its act. Salvadoran voters returned Arena to power last year for the third time since 1992. Its presidential candidate, Tony Saca, beat former guerrilla leader Shafik Handal by a landslide. Would El Playón's voters have made a difference? Well, we'll never know.

The question of the moment is not the state of play in El Salvador, however, it's the disaster in Iraq. The Bush administration has a dismal record learning the wrong lessons from the wrong paradigms when it comes to Iraq. This was not the liberation of France, nor the occupation of Germany or Japan, and America's war on terrorists is not the same as Israel's war with the Palestinians. So, let's take a real close look at what we're talking about here when we discuss the Salvador Option.

For starters, what's been written about the NEWSWEEK report by Michael Hirsh and John Barry goes far beyond what the story says. It doesn't suggest for a minute, as the BBC reported, that the Pentagon is looking to create "paramilitary" death squads. It's about the possible training of elite units to snatch or kill very specific insurgent leaders.

In fact, the policy could be a formalization of what's already taking place. "We are, of course, already targeting enemy cadres for elimination whether by capture or death in various places including Afghanistan and Iraq," says Patrick Lang, former chief of Middle East analysis for the U.S. Defense Intelligence Agency. According to Lang, so many people in the Special Operations Forces have been caught up in efforts to do just that, there's actually a shortage of Green Berets to do what they're most needed for: training regular Iraqi troops. "Surely," says Lang, "no one except the Jihadis thinks that we should not be hunting enemy leaders and key personnel."

But that's not the problem, quite. What those of us in El Salvador learned was that American policy might call for surgical action, but once the local troops are involved, they're as likely to use a chain-saw as a scalpel. And that, too, can serve American ends. In almost any counter-insurgency, the basic message the government or the occupiers tries to get across to the population is brutally simple: "We can protect you from the guerrillas, but the guerrillas can't protect you from us, and you've got to choose sides." Sometimes you can win the population's hearts and minds; sometimes you just have to make them more frightened of you than they are of the insurgents.

“That was part of the thinking behind Fallujah,” says a well-informed Coalition official, referring to the ferocious offensive that re-took the city in November. “We have only one of the tools so far. That is, ‘You can’t protect your people from us.’ In Fallujah they had a little Salafi state. Well, that’s gone now.” The city remains in ruins; at least 50 American soldiers lost their lives, as well as hundreds, perhaps thousands of insurgents and civilians. It was a mighty tough lesson to teach. In terms of toe-to-toe urban combat, “that was the heaviest fighting the U.S. has been involved in since 1968,” says the same official. Yet the Americans have not managed to protect the Iraqi citizenry from terror and intimidation by the guerrillas. “That’s not something we’re good at,” says the official.

His remarks were echoed by a senior U.S. embassy officer, who said the Americans just can’t begin to out-intimidate the guerrillas. “It’s a lesson we can’t teach,” says the embassy official. “We’re not capable of that.” Grabbing here and there for analogies, this guy started talking about what the late Syrian President Hafez Assad did to Sunni fundamentalists holed up in the city of Hama in 1982. Assad flattened a large section of the town. “Short of ‘Hama rules,’” the official asked rhetorically, “what do you do?”

In Iraq, in fact, as in many other places where the United States has tried to train ethical armies to fight dirty wars, the Iraqi troops are tacitly expected to do what American troops won’t. A fundamental purpose of the upcoming elections on January 30 is to create democratic legitimacy for whatever extreme measures the newly organized military decides to take.

Because we’re talking about the supposed Salvador Option, I figured I’d get back in touch with Joaquín Villalobos, El Salvador’s most brilliant **guerrilla leader**. Now at Oxford, he favored the Iraq war in 2003, but is dumbfounded by the direction the conflict has taken. Villalobos was dryly analytical, as ever. “The problem of repression and its possible effectiveness corresponds to five basic elements: proportionality, the scope of the conflict, time, a context that favors a multiplier effect or not, and the ability to control what you’re doing.” If so, a helluva lot more fine tuning is needed than we’re likely to see in Iraq any time soon. “If the generals think that with the hatred against the United States that exists in the region, with the divisions in Iraqi society, with Syria, Iran and others around, starting a dirty war is something that will give them an edge, they are totally and absolutely lost and desperate,” says Villalobos. “Invading Iraq without a post-war plan created chaos, subsequent mistakes converted the chaos into organized resistance, and if they keep blundering ahead blindly, they’ll convert the resistance into a real civil war.”

A U.S. official in Baghdad agrees. “We’re bleeding from so many self-inflicted wounds,” he told me the other day. The Salvador Option would be just one more.

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Bush's 'Death Squads'

By Robert Parry
January 11, 2005

Refusing to admit personal misjudgments on Iraq, George W. Bush instead is pushing the United States toward becoming what might be called a permanent "counter-terrorist" state, which uses torture, cross-border death squads and even collective punishments to defeat perceived enemies in Iraq and around the world.

Since securing a second term, Bush has pressed ahead with this hard-line strategy, in part by removing dissidents inside his administration while retaining or promoting his protégés. Bush also has started prepping his younger brother Jeb as a possible successor in 2008, which could help extend George W.'s war policies while keeping any damaging secrets under the Bush family's control.

As a centerpiece of this tougher strategy to pacify Iraq, Bush is contemplating the adoption of the brutal practices that were used to suppress leftist peasant uprisings in Central America in the 1980s. The Pentagon is "intensively debating" a new policy for Iraq called the "Salvador option," Newsweek magazine reported on Jan. 9.

The strategy is named after the Reagan-Bush administration's "still-secret strategy" of supporting El Salvador's right-wing security forces, which operated clandestine "death squads" to eliminate both leftist guerrillas and their civilian sympathizers, Newsweek reported. "Many U.S. conservatives consider the policy to have been a success – despite the deaths of innocent civilians," Newsweek wrote.

Central America Veterans

The magazine also noted that a number of Bush administration officials were leading figures in the Central American operations of the 1980s, such as John Negroponte, who was then U.S. Ambassador to Honduras and is now U.S. Ambassador to Iraq.

Other current officials who played key roles in Central America include Elliott Abrams, who oversaw Central American policies at the State Department and who is now a Middle East adviser on Bush's National Security Council staff, and Vice President Dick Cheney, who was a powerful defender of the Central American policies while a member of the House of Representatives.

The insurgencies in El Salvador and Guatemala were crushed through the slaughter of tens of thousands of civilians. In Guatemala, about 200,000 people perished, including what a truth commission later termed a genocide against Mayan Indians in the Guatemalan highlands. In El Salvador, about 70,000 died including massacres of whole villages, such as the slaughter carried out by a U.S.-trained battalion against hundreds of men, women and children in and around the town of El Mozote in 1981.

The Reagan-Bush strategy also had a domestic component, the so-called “perception management” operation that employed sophisticated propaganda to manipulate the fears of the American people while hiding the ugly reality of the wars. The Reagan-Bush administration justified its actions in Central America by portraying the popular uprisings as an attempt by the Soviet Union to establish a beachhead in the Americas to threaten the U.S. southern border.

[For details about how these strategies worked and the role of George H.W. Bush, see Robert Parry’s *Secrecy & Privilege: Rise of the Bush Dynasty from Watergate to Iraq*.]

More Pain

By employing the “Salvador option” in Iraq, the U.S. military would crank up the pain, especially in Sunni Muslim areas where resistance to the U.S. occupation of Iraq has been strongest. In effect, Bush would assign other Iraqi ethnic groups the job of leading the “death squad” campaign against the Sunnis.

“One Pentagon proposal would send Special Forces teams to advise, support and possibly train Iraqi squads, most likely hand-picked Kurdish Perhmerga fighters and Shiite militiamen, to target Sunni insurgents and their sympathizers, even across the border into Syria, according to military insiders familiar with discussions,” Newsweek reported.

Newsweek quoted one military source as saying, “The Sunni population is paying no price for the support it is giving the terrorists. … From their point of view, it is cost-free. We have to change that equation.”

Citing the Central American experiences of many Bush administration officials, we wrote in November 2003 – more than a year ago – that many of these Reagan-Bush veterans were drawing lessons from the 1980s in trying to cope with the Iraqi insurgency. We pointed out, however, that the conditions were not parallel. [See Consortiumnews.com’s “Iraq: Quicksand & Blood.”]

In Central America, powerful oligarchies had long surrounded themselves with ruthless security forces and armies. So, when uprisings swept across the region in the early 1980s, the Reagan-Bush administration had ready-made – though unsavory – allies who could do the dirty work with financial and technological help from Washington.

Iraqi Dynamic

A different dynamic exists in Iraq, because the Bush administration chose to disband rather than co-opt the Iraqi army. That left U.S. forces with few reliable local allies and put the onus for carrying out counterinsurgency operations on American soldiers who were unfamiliar with the land, the culture and the language.

Those problems, in turn, contributed to a series of counterproductive tactics, including the heavy-handed round-ups of Iraqi suspects, the torturing of prisoners at Abu Ghraib, and the killing of innocent civilians by jittery U.S. troops fearful of suicide bombings.

The war in Iraq also has undermined U.S. standing elsewhere in the Middle East and around the world. Images of U.S. soldiers sexually abusing Iraqi prisoners, putting bags over the

heads of captives and shooting a wounded insurgent have blackened America's image everywhere and made cooperation with the United States increasingly difficult even in countries long considered American allies.

Beyond the troubling images, more and more documents have surfaced indicating that the Bush administration had adopted limited forms of torture as routine policy, both in Iraq and the broader War on Terror. Last August, an FBI counterterrorism official criticized abusive practices at the prison at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba.

"On a couple of occasions, I entered interview rooms to find a detainee chained hand and foot in a fetal position to the floor, with no chair, food or water. Most times they had urinated or defecated on themselves, and had been left there for 18-24 hours or more," the official wrote. "When I asked the M.P.'s what was going on, I was told that interrogators from the day prior had ordered this treatment, and the detainee was not to be moved. On another occasion … the detainee was almost unconscious on the floor, with a pile of hair next to him. He had apparently been literally pulling his own hair out throughout the night."

Despite official insistence that torture is not U.S. policy, the blame for these medieval tactics continues to climb the chain of command toward the Oval Office. It appears to have been Bush's decision after the Sept. 11 attacks to "take the gloves off," a reaction understandable at the time but which now appears to have hurt, more than helped.

TV World

Many Americans have fantasized about how they would enjoy watching Osama bin Laden tortured to death for his admitted role in the Sept. 11 attacks. There is also a tough-guy fondness for torture as shown in action entertainment – like Fox Network's "24" – where torture is a common-sense shortcut to get results.

But the larger danger arises when the exceptional case becomes the routine, when it's no longer the clearly guilty al-Qaeda mass murderer, but it is now the distraught Iraqi father trying to avenge the death of his child killed by American bombs.

Rather than the dramatic scenes on TV, the reality is usually more like that desperate creature in Guantanamo lying in his own waste and pulling out his hair. The situation can get even worse when torture takes on the industrial quality of government policy, with subjects processed through the gulags or the concentration camps.

That also is why the United States and other civilized countries have long banned torture and prohibited the intentional killing of civilians. The goal of international law has been to set standards that couldn't be violated even in extreme situations or in the passions of the moment.

Yet, Bush – with his limited world experience – was easily sold on the notion of U.S. "exceptionalism" where America's innate goodness frees it from the legal constraints that apply to lesser countries.

Bush also came to believe in the wisdom of his "gut" judgments. After his widely praised ouster of Afghanistan's Taliban government in late 2001, Bush set his sights on invading Iraq. Like a hot gambler in Las Vegas doubling his bets, Bush's instincts were on a roll.

Now, however, as the Iraqi insurgency continues to grow and inflict more casualties on both U.S. troops and Iraqis who have thrown in their lot with the Americans, Bush finds himself facing a narrowing list of very tough choices.

Bush could acknowledge his mistakes and seek international help in extricating U.S. forces from Iraq. But Bush abhors admitting errors, even small ones. Plus, Bush's belligerent tone hasn't created much incentive for other countries to bail him out.

Instead Bush appears to be upping the ante by contemplating cross-border raids into countries neighboring Iraq. He also would be potentially expanding the war by having Iraqi Kurds and Shiites kill Sunnis, a prescription for civil war or genocide.

Pinochet Option

There's a personal risk, too, for Bush if he picks the "Salvador option." He could become an American version of Chilean dictator Augusto Pinochet or Guatemala's Efrain Rios Montt, leaders who turned loose their security forces to commit assassinations, "disappear" opponents and torture captives.

Like the policy that George W. Bush is now considering, Pinochet even sponsored his own international "death squad" – known as Operation Condor – that hunted down political opponents around the world. One of those attacks in September 1976 blew up a car carrying Chilean dissident Orlando Letelier as he drove through Washington D.C. with two American associates. Letelier and co-worker Ronni Moffitt were killed.

With the help of American friends in high places, the two former dictators have fended off prison until now. However, Pinochet and Rios Montt have become pariahs who are facing legal proceedings aimed at finally holding them accountable for their atrocities. [For more on George H.W. Bush's protection of Pinochet, see Parry's *Secrecy & Privilege*.]

One way for George W. Bush to avert that kind of trouble is to make sure his political allies remain in power even after his second term ends in January 2009. In his case, that might be achievable by promoting his brother Jeb for president in 2008, thus guaranteeing that any incriminating documents stay under wraps.

President George W. Bush's dispatching Florida Gov. Jeb Bush to inspect the tsunami damage in Asia started political speculation that one of the reasons was to burnish Jeb's international credentials in a setting where his personal empathy would be on display.

Though Jeb Bush has insisted that he won't run for president in 2008, the Bush family might find strong reason to encourage Jeb to change his mind, especially if the Iraq War is lingering and George W. has too many file cabinets filled with damaging secrets.

Robert Parry broke many of the Iran-Contra stories in the 1980s for the Associated Press and Newsweek. His new book, *Secrecy & Privilege: Rise of the Bush Dynasty from Watergate to Iraq,* can be ordered at secrecyandprivilege.com. It's also available at Amazon.com, as is his 1999 book, *Lost History: Contras, Cocaine, the Press & 'Project Truth.'*
http://www.consortiumnews.com/2005/011105.html

Death-squad style massacres

For Iraq, "The Salvador Option" Becomes Reality

by Max Fuller

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Abstract

The following article examines evidence that the 'Salvador Option' for Iraq has been ongoing for some time and attempts to say what such an option will mean. It pays particular attention to the role of the Special Police Commandos, considering both the background of their US liaisons and their deployment in Iraq. The article also looks at the evidence for death-squad style massacres in Iraq and draws attention to the almost complete absence of investigation. As such, the article represents an initial effort to compile and examine some of these mass killings and is intended to spur others into further looking at the evidence. Finally, the article turns away from the notion that sectarianism is a sufficient explanation for the violence in Iraq, locating it structurally at the hands of the state as part of the ongoing economic subjugation of Iraq.

Mounting evidence indicates that the 'Salvador Option' mooted for Iraq is already proceeding at full throttle

On 8 January this year, Newsweek published an article that claimed the US government was considering a 'Salvador Option' to combat the insurgency in Iraq (http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/6802629/site/newsweek/). The Salvador Option is a reference to the military assistance programme of the 1980s, initiated under Jimmy Carter and subsequently pursued by the Reagan administration, in which the US trained and materially supported the Salvadoran military in its counter-insurgency campaign against popularly supported FMLN guerrillas. The Newsweek article was widely cited in the mainstream media but the allegations were rapidly dismissed by Secretary of Defence Donald Rumsfeld. Though the reports mentioned human-rights violations, they generally made little of the fact that it was the very units that US military advisors had instructed that were frequently responsible for the most unspeakable crimes* and that there was at times a clear correlation between fresh bouts of training and subsequent atrocities (see Noam Chomsky, 'The Crucifixion of El Salvador', http://www.zmag.org/chomsky/sam/sam-2-02.html).

In an earlier interview on 10 January, retired General Wayne Downing, former head of all US special operations forces, took a very different line, stating that US-backed special units had been 'conducting strikes' against leaders of the so-called insurgency since March 2003 (cited in 'Phoenix Rising in Iraq' by Stephen Shalom, http://www.zmag.org/content/showarticle.cfm?ItemID=7227). However, Downing was careful to say that implementing a Salvadoran strategy would add an extra 'type' of unit to the occupation's arsenal. What neither the press, Donald Rumsfeld, nor General Downing pointed out was that the Salvador Option was already well underway in Iraq, and far more literally than might have been imagined.

According to an article recently published in New York Times Magazine, in September 2004 Counsellor to the US Ambassador for Iraqi Security Forces James Steele was assigned to work with a new elite Iraqi counter-insurgency unit known as the Special Police Commandos, formed under the operational control of Iraq's Interior Ministry ('The Way of the Commandos', Peter Maass, http://psychoanalystsopposewar.org/resources_files/TheWay_of_the_Commandos.html).

From 1984 to 1986 then Col. Steele had led the US Military Advisory Group in El Salvador, where he was responsible for developing special operating forces at brigade level during the height of the conflict. These forces, composed of the most brutal soldiers available, replicated the kind of small-unit operations with which Steele was familiar from his service in Vietnam. Rather than focusing on seizing terrain, their role was to attack 'insurgent' leadership, their supporters, sources of supply and base camps. In the case of the 4th Brigade, such tactics ensured that a 20-man force was able to account for 60% of the total casualties inflicted by the unit (Manwaring, *El Salvador at War*, 1988, p 306-8). In military circles it was the use of such tactics that made the difference in ultimately defeating the guerrillas; for others, such as the Catholic priest Daniel Santiago, the presence of people like Steele contributed to another sort of difference:

People are not just killed by death squads in El Salvador – they are decapitated and then their heads are placed on pikes and used to dot the landscape. Men are not just disemboweled by the Salvadoran Treasury Police; their severed genitalia are stuffed into their mouths. Salvadoran women are not just raped by the National Guard; their wombs are cut from their bodies and used to cover their faces. It is not enough to kill children; they are dragged over barbed wire until the flesh falls from their bones, while parents are forced to watch. (Cited by Chomsky, op cit.)

The Police Commandos are in large part the brainchild of another US counter-insurgency veteran, Steven Casteel, a former top DEA man who has been acting as the senior advisor in the Ministry of the Interior. Casteel was involved in the hunt for Colombia's notorious cocaine baron Pablo Escobar, during which the DEA collaborated with a paramilitary organization known as *Los Pepes*, which later transformed itself into the AUC, an umbrella organization covering all of Colombia's paramilitary death squads (http://cocaine.org/colombia/pablo-escobar.html ; http://www.ciponline.org/colombia/040105isac.htm).

Like Colombia's death squads, Iraq's Police Commandos deliberately cultivate a frightening paramilitary image. During raids they wear balaclavas and black leather gloves and openly intimidate and brutalize suspects, even in the presence of foreign journalists (see the report by Peter Maass's). Significantly, many of the Commandos, including their leader, are Sunni Muslims.

Evidence of Massacres

In the last few weeks, with the discovery of several mass graves in and around Baghdad, evidence of multiple extra-judicial killings has started to become much more visible, but, in fact, even a cursory review of such archives as the one compiled by Iraq Body Count (http://www.iraqbodycount.net /) reveals that mass executions have been taking place commonly in Iraq over at least the last six months. What is particularly striking is that many of those killings have taken place since the Police Commandos became operationally active and often correspond with areas where they have been deployed.

The clearest correlation is in Mosul, where the Police Commandos began operating in late October (http://www.strykernews.com/archives/2004/10/29/special_iraqi_police_commandos_con

tinue_operations.html). In mid-November it was reported that insurgents were conducting an offensive and had managed to drive most of the (regular) police from the city. There followed what was described as a joint counter-offensive by US forces and Police Commandos. The Police Commandos conducted raids inside the old quarter starting on 16 November in which dozens of suspects were arrested. During one such raid on a mosque and a tea shop, detainees, blindfolded and with their hands tied behind their backs, were seen being taken away by commandos (http://www.smh.com.au/news/After-Saddam/Iraqi-soldiers-found-murdered-in-Mosul/2004/11/21/1100972263000.html). In the weeks and months that followed over 150 bodies appeared (http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/4105009.stm), often in batches and frequently having obviously been executed, usually with a bullet to the head (eg. http://www.middle-east-online.com/english/iraq/?id=12147).

The victims are repeatedly stated to have belonged mostly to the security forces, with 'insurgents' blamed for conducting a campaign of intimidation. Yet, most of the bodies were dressed in civilian clothes with little in the way of identification. In the few instances in which positive identifications have been reported, these are based on flimsy evidence. For instance, in the case of nine victims described as soldiers that had been shot in the head, a US army lieutenant simply stated that a 'unit recently moved to one of the US bases' had 'some guys missing' (http://www.smh.com.au/news/After-Saddam/Iraqi-soldiers-found-murdered-in-Mosul/2004/11/21/1100972263000.html); photographs of the victims showed them wearing civilian clothes. A blatant case of disinformation regards a group of 31 bodies 'discovered' by the Police Commandos in March 2005 scattered around a cemetery in western Mosul. The bodies, described by an Interior Ministry spokesman as belonging to civilians, police officers and army soldiers, were said to have been the victims of a single policeman, Shoqayer Fareed Sheet, who confessed to these and numerous other killings on a special television show conceived by founder of the Police Commandos Adnan Thavit, called Terrorism in the Hands of Justice (http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/articles/A23448-2005Mar10.html). Not only does this programme break every conceivable moral and legal standard, but it is notorious for parading obviously tortured detainees who are often forced to confess to being homosexuals or paedophiles as well as murderers. (http://66.102.9.104/search?q=cache:OkQ0b9q9QbkJ:uniraq.org/documents/ArabicRegionalNews22 March2005.doc+quds+press&hl=en&client=safari)

Given the extreme paucity of evidence, the lack of secure identification and the disinformation put out by the Interior Ministry, there is at least a strong possibility that many, if not all, of the extra-judicial killings in Mosul have been carried out by the Police Commandos.

Police Commandos Directly Accused

A similar, thought less complete pattern is emerging in other areas where the Commandos have been operating, notably Samarra, where bodies were recently found in nearby Lake Tharthar (http://www.turkishpress.com/news.asp?id=41936). However, the strongest case is currently starting to emerge in Baghdad, where a wave of killings over the last few weeks has resulted in accusations being made directly against the state security forces and specifically against the Police Commandos. The accusations revolve around three distinct massacres. On 5 May a shallow mass grave was discovered in the Kasra-Wa-Atash industrial area containing 14 bodies. The victims, all young men, had been blindfolded, their hands tied behind their backs and they had been executed with shots to the head. The bodies also revealed such torture marks as broken skulls, burning, beatings and right eyeballs removed. In this case family members were able to identify the bodies; the victims were Sunni farmers on their way to market. According to Phil Shiner of the British-based Public Interest Lawyers, the men had been arrested when Iraqi security forces raided the vegetable market

(http://www.guardian.co.uk/international/story/0,,1488096,00.html , http://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory?id=760368).

Less than two weeks later on 15 May, 15 more bodies were discovered at two sites in western Baghdad. Eight of the victims were found In the Al-Shaab area, while a further seven were discovered behind a mosque in Ore district (http://www.kuna.net.kw/home/Story.aspx?Language=en&DSNO=733276). According to the Chicago Tribune, 'some had been blindfolded, most were found with their hands bound and all had been shot in the head' (http://www.chicagotribune.com/news/nationworld/chi-0505170030may17,0,3795261.story?coll=chi-newsopinionperspective-utl). The Association of Muslim Scholars quickly responded to the wave of killings, accusing soldiers and Interior Ministry commandos of having 'arrested imams and the guardians of some mosques, tortured and killed them, then got rid of their bodies in a garbage dump in the Shaab district' (http://www.mg.co.za/articlePage.aspx?articleid=238784&area=/breaking_news/breaking_news__international_news/). 'This is state terrorism by the Ministry of Interior' said Hareth al-Dhari, secretary general of the Association (http://news.ft.com/cms/s/47613c82-c804-11d9-9765-00000e2511c8.html). Whilst al-Dhari also blamed the Badr brigades associated with the ruling Shia coalition, the emphasis of his denunciation was quickly shifted in the mainstream press to reinforce only this aspect of the accusation and the notion of sectarian tit-for-tat violence (eg http://newswww.bbc.net.uk/1/hi/world/middle_east/4569103.stm). The Iraqi government's riposte to the Association's accusations was predictably insidious, with the new defence minister blaming terrorists wearing military uniforms (http://www.chicagotribune.com/news/nationworld/chi-0505170030may17,0,3795261.story?coll=chi-newsopinionperspective-utl). However, it should come as little surprise to discover that at the beginning of May the government had announced an imminent counter-insurgency crackdown, which they said was likely to unleash well-trained commandos in Baghdad and other trouble spots (http://www.informationclearinghouse.info/article8725.htm).

Wider Evidence of Massacres

With such accusations being made specifically against US-trained counter-insurgency forces it is worth briefly mentioning some of the other massacres that have occurred in Iraq over recent months. In October 2004 some 49 bodies were discovered on a remote road about 50km south of Baquba. The victims, who wore civilian clothes, had all been shot in the head. The Interior Ministry announced that they were off-duty soldiers. Some accounts by police said the rebels were dressed in Iraqi military uniforms, although details were far from clear (http://sfgate.com/cgi-bin/article.cgi?file=/news/archive/2004/10/24/international0921EDT0440.DTL ; http://www.foxnews.com/story/0,2933,136419,00.html).

Similarly, in March of this year 26 bodies were discovered at Rumana, near Qaim, close to the Syrian border. According to the Interior Ministry, most of the victims were members of a rapid response team. The victims had been blindfolded, handcuffed and shot in the head. The bodies, which once again were dressed in civilian clothes, were found in an area where the US army had been conducting Operation River Blitz, a marine-led assault on insurgents in the Euphrates River valley (http://www.foxnews.com/story/0,2933,136419,00.html ; http://edition.cnn.com/2005/WORLD/meast/03/09/iraq.main/).

To further muddy the waters, the bodies of eight men from Sadr City were found in Yussufiah, 40km south of Baghdad, on 9 May this year. The victims, who had been tortured, then executed with a bullet to the back of the neck, were found wearing army uniforms, but relatives identified them as civilians. Army captain Ahmed Hussein suggested that the killers wanted people to believe they had executed soldiers (http://www.news24.com/News24/World/Iraq/0,,2-10-1460_1701988,00.html).

There are other similar cases of mass killings, as well as many more involving smaller numbers of bodies far too numerous to mention. Nonetheless, it is worth emphasising the many bodies (more than 100) gradually being dredged up from the River Tigris, especially around Suwayra, south of Baghdad. The bodies began to be noticed in late February of this year, surfacing at the rate of one or two a day, but began to increase in frequency in April; some of the victims, who were mostly men but included some women and children, were bound, others shot or beheaded. In April, president Talabani claimed the victims had been kidnapped by insurgents in the village of Madain, but, in fact, those identified to date hailed from a wide radius and could not be accounted for by a single episode of kidnapping. Police in Suwayra have stated that many of the victims are likely to have been stopped at impromptu checkpoints by masked men, while some Sunnis say that the victims may include people detained by the police (http://www.sfgate.com/cgi-bin/article.cgi?file=/chronicle/archive/2005/04/22/MNG45CDDBQ1.DTL).

In light of these bodies in the Tigris, it may be significant to note a strange report on the website Jihad Unspun of US soldiers dumping body bags from helicopters in the Diali River in eastern Iraq during the early hours of the morning. The writer argues that the bags held the corpses of American soldiers or foreign mercenaries that the army wished to conceal from public knowledge (http://www.jihadunspun.com/intheatre_internal.php?article=100552&list=/home.php&). This implausible theory leaves a very large question mark over the identity of bodies that the US army wishes to conceal and recalls the report submitted to the Brussels Tribunal, 'Tarmiya: the Silent Agony'. This account contains first hand testimony from an agricultural worker who survived an attempted execution by a team of US special forces. He and a colleague were abducted from the farm where they worked, then taken to a secluded grove where their throats were cut. They were left for dead, but miraculously, one of them survived (http://www.brusselstribunal.org /). Whilst this account lacks corroboration and has remained anonymous to protect the identities of those involved, it remains a convincing description of the kind of long-range 'reconnaissance' missions that people like James Steele were conducting in Vietnam.

Modelling the Iraq War

Whilst much of the violence across Iraq appears chaotic, some lines are starting to emerge that follow the pattern and the logic of other counter-insurgency wars. In El Salvador, when the war finally came to an end, it became clear that the majority of its victims had been participants in progressive social movements as well as peasants who had been perceived as sympathising with or supporting the guerrillas. The object of the war was not to defeat an ideologically motivated rebellion, it was to prevent the possibility of progressive social change and to maintain the country within the US economic orbit in its traditional tributary role.

The same can be said of Colombia at present, where the long current phase of the internal conflict in which thousands of social activists have been murdered has butted seamlessly with the country's exposure to economic liberalisation. In short, legitimate social demands are violently suppressed in favour of allowing foreign capital to extract super profits from Colombia's rich natural resources and selling off its public assets for the same purpose. Much of the conflict takes place within the realm of so-called 'civil society', where progressive leaders are excluded or eliminated, whilst those who are prepared to throw in their lot with predatory foreign capital are rewarded and extolled.

In Iraq the war comes in two phases. The first phase is complete: the destruction of the existing state, which did not comply with the interests of British and American capital. The second phase consists of building a new state tied to those interests and smashing every dissenting sector of society. Openly, this involves applying the same sort of economic shock

therapy that has done so much damage in swathes of the Third World and Eastern Europe. Covertly, it means intimidating, kidnapping and murdering opposition voices.

The economic assault on Iraq is well underway. Visible unemployment stands at around the catastrophic level of 28%, large parts of the state sector have already been sold off and wages have fallen (often to less than half of their pre-war levels), thanks in part to the introduction of thousands of cheap workers from Pakistan, India and the Philippines. These workers are often tricked into coming and stripped of their passports, effectively working as slaves in order to undercut accustomed Iraqi living standards. Reconstruction projects are given almost exclusively to foreign (mainly US) companies, who pay a flat rate of 15% tax with no limits to repatriation of profits, while Iraq's state-owned companies are excluded (http://www.antiwar.com/orig/shumway.php?articleid=3005). In the countryside, Iraqi farmers are now obliged to buy a licence to grow genetically modified seed and are prohibited from resowing the seed developed by their ancestors in the cradle of civilisation (http://www.globalresearch.ca/articles/KHA501A.html).

The covert assault has also begun. Attacks on workers and trade unionists are becoming increasingly common (http://www.iraqitradeunions.org/archives/000200.html) and it is instructive that the railway workers union, in an industry that has been slated for privatisation, seems to have been particularly targeted, with US administrators on the ground threatening to bring in Indian workers (http://www.iraqitradeunions.org/archives/000117.html). Whilst the IFTU, the dominant, state-sanctioned new trade-union umbrella organisation, may have endorsed the occupation, the Federation of Workers Councils and Unions in Iraq (FWCUI) has not; in any case, ordinary Iraqi workers will find themselves increasingly at odds with the puppet government as they try to defend even rudimentary living standards. Industrial action is already widespread in Iraq, though little reported in the mainstream press.

An even more frightening picture is emerging within the sector of higher education, where, since the beginning of the occupation, some 200 Iraqi academics have been murdered, while control and intimidation has become systematic. Many of the victims worked in the social sciences, where overlap with progressive social movements is unavoidable (http://www.newstatesman.com/200409060018).

Unfortunately, in Iraq it is almost impossible to securely attribute any of the host of assassinations and extra-judicial killings, while the US-UK propaganda campaign has left many all too willing to believe in such bugbears as Al-Zarqawi (see Michel Chossudovsky's article 'Who is Abu Musab Al-Zarqawi?' (http://www.globalresearch.ca/articles/CHO405B.html). What we do know, however, is that hundreds of Iraqis are being murdered and that paramilitary hit squads of the proxy government organized by US trainers with a fulsome pedigree in state terrorism are increasingly being associated with them.

In the context of a country where good information is extremely scarce, disinformation and black propaganda are endemic and independent journalists and monitors are deliberately eliminated, it is vital to be able to model the situation in order to understand it and, hopefully, be effective. There are two principle dimensions to such modelling. In the first, Iraq has frequently been compared to Vietnam. The similarity is that the US has well over 100,000 soldiers on the ground. However, the analogy is misleading in that in Iraq conflict with a populous enemy state, as North Vietnam was, ended quickly. As a model, El Salvador is not wholly accurate either. In El Salvador US 'advisors' were few in number and prohibited from taking part in combat. Nevertheless, it is towards this model that the US is attempting to move, hoping to farm out the sordid business of occupation to Iraqi auxiliaries. But, in many ways it is contemporary Colombia that offers the closest analogy: not for the disposition of US forces, but because here the same process of asset-stripping,

impoverishment and conquistador-like plundering is both deeply entrenched and ongoing. It is here that is to be found that clearest pattern for the assaults on academics, independent trade unionists and peasant organisations that will increasingly characterise Iraq for those prepared to look beyond the fireworks. This is the second dimension that any model must address, but in essence the pattern is repeated time after time in every imperialist so-called counter-insurgency war; for behind each and every one lurks the reality of exploitation and class war, and, as successive imperialist powers have shown, the bottom line in combating the hopes and dreams of ordinary people is to resort to spreading terror through the application of extreme violence. In Iraq, the Salvador Option may mean returning home to find your entire family seated at table with their own severed heads served to them and a bowl of blood for relish.

*One of the worst atrocities was committed in December 1981 at the village of El Mozote in the department of Moraz‡n by the Atlacatl Battalion, an elite counter-insurgency force trained by US advisors and regarded as one of El Salvador's best fighting units. Over 200 men, women and children (the entire village) were systematically tortured and murdered over the course of a day (http://www.usip.org/library/tc/doc/reports/el_salvador/tc_es_03151993_casesC.html).

Max Fuller has worked for some years as a member of the Colombia Solidarity Campaign in the UK and has read extensively on US policy and Latin America. He is the author of several reports published in the *Bulletin of the Colombia Solidarity Campaign*.

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Newsweek

'The Salvador Option'

The Pentagon may put Special-Forces-led assassination or kidnapping teams in Iraq

WEB EXCLUSIVE
By Michael Hirsh and John Barry
Newsweek
Updated: 8:59 p.m. ET Jan. 14, 2005

Jan. 8 - What to do about the deepening quagmire of Iraq? The Pentagon's latest approach is being called "the Salvador option"—and the fact that it is being discussed at all is a measure of just how worried Donald Rumsfeld really is. "What everyone agrees is that we can't just go on as we are," one senior military officer told NEWSWEEK. "We have to find a way to take the offensive against the insurgents. Right now, we are playing defense. And we are losing." Last November's operation in Fallujah, most analysts agree, succeeded less in breaking "the back" of the insurgency—as Marine Gen. John Sattler optimistically declared at the time—than in spreading it out.

Now, NEWSWEEK has learned, the Pentagon is intensively debating an option that dates back to a still-secret strategy in the Reagan administration's battle against the leftist guerrilla insurgency in El Salvador in the early 1980s. Then, faced with a losing war against Salvadoran rebels, the U.S. government funded or supported "nationalist" forces that allegedly included so-called death squads directed to hunt down and kill rebel leaders and sympathizers. Eventually the insurgency was quelled, and many U.S. conservatives consider the policy to have been a success—despite the deaths of innocent civilians and the subsequent Iran-Contra arms-for-hostages scandal. (Among the current administration officials who dealt with Central America back then is John Negroponte, who is today the U.S. ambassador to Iraq. Under Reagan, he was ambassador to Honduras. There is no evidence, however, that Negroponte knew anything about the Salvadoran death squads or the Iran-Contra scandal at the time. The Iraq ambassador, in a phone call to NEWSWEEK on Jan. 10, said he was not involved in military strategy in Iraq. He called the insertion of his name into this report "utterly gratuitous.")

Following that model, one Pentagon proposal would send Special Forces teams to advise, support and possibly train Iraqi squads, most likely hand-picked Kurdish Peshmerga fighters and Shiite militiamen, to target Sunni insurgents and their sympathizers, even across the border into Syria, according to military insiders familiar with the discussions. It remains unclear, however, whether this would be a policy of assassination or so-called "snatch" operations, in which the targets are sent to secret facilities for interrogation. The current thinking is that while U.S. Special Forces would lead operations in, say, Syria, activities inside Iraq itself would be carried out by Iraqi paramilitaries, officials tell NEWSWEEK.

Also being debated is which agency within the U.S. government—the Defense department or CIA—would take responsibility for such an operation. Rumsfeld's Pentagon has aggressively sought to build up its own intelligence-gathering and clandestine capability with an operation run by Defense Undersecretary Stephen Cambone. But since the Abu Ghraib interrogations scandal, some military officials are ultra-wary of any operations that could run afoul of the ethics codified in the Uniform Code of Military Justice. That, they argue, is the reason why such covert operations have always been run by the CIA and authorized by a special presidential finding. (In "covert" activity, U.S. personnel operate under cover and the U.S. government will not confirm that it instigated or ordered them into action if they are captured or killed.)

Meanwhile, intensive discussions are taking place inside the Senate Intelligence Committee over the Defense department's efforts to expand the involvement of U.S. Special Forces personnel in intelligence-gathering missions. Historically, Special Forces' intelligence gathering has been limited to objectives directly related to upcoming military operations—"preparation of the battlefield," in military lingo. But, according to intelligence and defense officials, some Pentagon civilians for years have sought to expand the use of Special Forces for other intelligence missions.

Pentagon civilians and some Special Forces personnel believe CIA civilian managers have traditionally been too conservative in planning and executing the kind of undercover missions that Special Forces soldiers believe they can effectively conduct. CIA traditionalists are believed to be adamantly opposed to ceding any authority to the Pentagon. Until now, Pentagon proposals for a capability to send soldiers out on intelligence missions without direct CIA approval or participation have been shot down. But counter-terrorist strike squads, even operating covertly, could be deemed to fall within the Defense department's orbit.

The interim government of Prime Minister Ayad Allawi is said to be among the most forthright proponents of the Salvador option. Maj. Gen.Muhammad Abdallah al-Shahwani, director of Iraq's National Intelligence Service, may have been laying the groundwork for

the idea with a series of interviews during the past ten days. Shahwani told the London-based Arabic daily Al-Sharq al-Awsat that the insurgent leadership—he named three former senior figures in the Saddam regime, including Saddam Hussein's half-brother—were essentially safe across the border in a Syrian sanctuary. "We are certain that they are in Syria and move easily between Syrian and Iraqi territories," he said, adding that efforts to extradite them "have not borne fruit so far."



Shahwani also said that the U.S. occupation has failed to crack the problem of broad support for the insurgency. The insurgents, he said, "are mostly in the Sunni areas where the population there, almost 200,000, is sympathetic to them." He said most Iraqi people do not actively support the insurgents or provide them with material or logistical help, but at the same time they won't turn them in. One military source involved in the Pentagon debate agrees that this is the crux of the problem, and he suggests that new offensive operations are needed that would create a fear of aiding the insurgency. "The Sunni population is paying no price for the support it is giving to the terrorists," he said. "From their point of view, it is cost-free. We have to change that equation."

Pentagon sources emphasize there has been no decision yet to launch the Salvador option. Last week, Rumsfeld decided to send a retired four-star general, Gary Luck, to Iraq on an open-ended mission to review the entire military strategy there. But with the U.S. Army strained to the breaking point, military strategists note that a dramatic new approach might be needed—perhaps one as potentially explosive as the Salvador option.

With Mark Hosenball

EDITOR'S NOTE: This report, initially published on Jan. 8, was updated on Jan. 10 to include Negroponte's comments to NEWSWEEK.
And at a news conference on Jan. 11, Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld said the idea of a Salvador option was "nonsense" and denied that U.S. Special Forces were going into Syria. But when asked whether such a policy was under consideration, he replied, "Why would I even talk about something like that?"

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The Rule, Not the Exception -- The "Salvador Option" in Context

By Sean Donahue,

Posted on Thu Jan 13th, 2005 at 02:11:43 PM EST

Newsweek reports that the Pentagon is considering having U.S. Special Forces train death squads in Iraq, modeled on U.S. death squads in El Salvador.

What Newsweek fails to note is that:

1. This policy represents standard U.S. counterinsurgency doctrine, employed around the world since the 1960's.

2. Two suspicious kidnappings in Iraq last year suggest that death squad activity may already exist in Iraq.

3. The "Salvador Option" is not an extreme option being considered by a few neo-cons at the Pentagon, rather it reflects a policy that could easily develop bipartisan support, and which John Kerry may have been hinting at during the presidential campaign.

4. The leak of the "Salvador Option" may be a conscious attempt to test the waters regarding public sentiment about Iraqi death squads and to pad the impact of later revelations about U.S. actions in Iraq.

Sometimes the problem isn't that the mainstream media misses a story, but rather that it missed the forest for the trees.

As Andrew Grice and John Eden have noted,, Newsweek reported last weekend that:

" the Pentagon is intensively debating an option that dates back to a still-secret strategy in the Reagan administration's battle against the leftist guerrilla insurgency in El Salvador in the early 1980s. Then, faced with a losing war against Salvadoran rebels, the U.S. government funded or supported 'nationalist' forces that allegedly included so-called death squads directed to hunt down and kill rebel leaders and sympathizers. Eventually the insurgency was quelled, and many U.S. conservatives consider the policy to have been a success—despite the deaths of innocent civilians and the subsequent Iran-Contra arms-for-hostages scandal. (Among the current administration officials who dealt with Central America back then is John Negroponte, who is today the U.S. ambassador to Iraq. Under Reagan, he was ambassador to Honduras. [. . .}Following that model, one Pentagon proposal would send Special Forces teams to advise, support and possibly train Iraqi squads, most likely hand-picked Kurdish Peshmerga fighters and Shiite militiamen, to target Sunni insurgents and their sympathizers, even across the border into Syria, according to military insiders familiar with the discussions. It remains unclear, however, whether this would be a policy of assassination or so-called 'snatch' operations, in which the targets are sent to secret facilities for interrogation. The current thinking is that while U.S. Special Forces would lead operations in, say, Syria, activities inside Iraq itself would be carried out by Iraqi paramilitaries, officials tell NEWSWEEK."

These "revelations" certainly come as no surprise to anyone with even the most basic understanding of U.S. counter-insurgency actions in Latin America. But by failing to put the "Salvador Option" in context, Newsweek ignores the reality that this plan represents the rule and not the exception in U.S. counterinsurgency operations, and that rather than being a controversial and extreme proposal it reflects the bipartisan desire for a policy that can shift the burden of killing and dying from U.S. soldiers to Iraqis.

DEATH SQUADS, TOTALITARIANISM, AND COUNTERINSURGENCY DOCTRINE

As Michael McClintock documented in his seminal work [*Instruments of Statecraft: U.S. Guerilla Warfare, Counterinsurgency, and Counterterrorism, 1940-1990* http://www.statecraft.org], during the Cold War the U.S. developed counterinsurgency policies based on the model of Nazi suppression of partisan insurgents that emphasized placing the civilian population under strict control and using terror to make the population affraid to support or collaborate with insurgents.

The legacy of this counterinsurgency doctrine is clear in the Army's new counterinsurgency manual, FM 100-20 / AFP 3-20 *Military Operations in Low Intensity Conflict.* The manual explains that "Population and Resources Control" (PRC) is essential to keep the civilian population from providing a base of support for an insurgency, while noting that such operations are highly contraversial and wherever possible the U.S. should farm them out to troops from the "host country." According to the manual:

"PRC measures can include--

-- Suspension of habeas corpus.
-- Curfews and blackout.
-- Travel restrictions.
-- Excluded or limited access areas.
-- Registration and pass systems.
-- Declaration that selected items or quantities of items, such as weapons, food, and fuel, are contraband.
-- Licensing, rationing, and price controls.
-- Checkpoints, searches, and surveillance.
-- Censorship."

Such tactics were developed as part of the "strategic hamlet" system in Vietnam, and have been widely implemented by U.S. client states -- most recently by Israel in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip and by Colombia in areas such as Arauca and certain neighborhoods of Medellin.

In areas seen as hotbeds of resistance, such as Fallujah, the Army is toled to escalate from "Population and Resources Control" to "Consolidation Operations" which include:

"Destroying, dispersing, or clearing insurgent tactical forces from the area.

Locating and destroying elements of the insurgency's supporting base area system.

Identifying and apprehending members of the insurgency's political infrastructure. "

"The insurgences supporting base area system" includes networks of support the insurgents have built in the community. "Identifying and appeshending members of the insurgency's political infrastructure" suggests rounding up people who support the insurgency's political goals -- a slightly more politically correct way to discuss taking out labor organizers, community leaders, human rights workers, and independent journalists. Incredibly, the manual openly refers to the use of paramilitary forces in carrying out "Consolidation Operations."

The Nazis pioneered the use of indigenous paramilitary forces to root out insurgents and sympathizers through the creation of forces such as the Croatian Ustashe. The U.S. first implemented the tactic in Colombia in the early 1960's. According to McClintock, following a 1962 visit to Colombia, Gen. William Yarborough wrote:

"[A] concerted country team effort should be made now to select civilian and military personnel for clandestine training in resistance operations in case they are needed later. This should be done with a view toward development of a civil and military structure for exploitation in the event the Colombian internal security system deteriorates further. This structure should be used to pressure

toward reforms known to be needed, perform counter-agent and counter-propaganda functions and as necessary execute paramilitary, sabotage and/or terrorist activities against known communist proponents. It should be backed by the United States."

The Colombian military implemented Yarborough's suggestion under "Plan Lazo," creating the forerunners of todays AUC death squads. The tactic has become the hallmark of U.S.-backed counterinsurgency operations from El Salvador to Guatemala to El Salvador to East Timor.

The purpose of the strategy is outlined in a 1962 Army Psychological Operations manual quoted by McClintock:

"Civilians in the operational area may be supporting their own government or collaborating with an enemy occupation force. An isolation program designed to instill doubt and fear may be carried out, and a positive political action program designed to elicit active support of the guerrillas also may be effected. If these programs fail, it may become necessary to take more aggressive action in the form of harsh treatment or even abductions. The abduction and harsh treatment of key enemy civilians can weaken the collaborators' belief in the strength and power of their military forces."

The controversial nature of such operations requires that they be carried out covertly and that whenever possible they be carried out by surrogates -- such as local paramillitary groups.

Fr. Javier Giraldo wrote in his 1996 book, *Colombia: The Genocidal Democracy*, that:

"the keystone of a strategy of 'Dirty War,' where the 'dirty' actions cannot be attributed to persons on behalf of the State because they have been delegated, passed along or projected upon confused bodies of armed civilians. Those committing the crimes are anonymous and easily definable as common delinquents who act and thereafter disappear into the fog. This covers up responsibility for acts which have no legal
justification or legitimacy, not even during times of warlike confrontations. The result is that they confound and complement two types of events: actions of military officers camouflaged as civilians and military action of civilians protected in a clandestine way by military personnel. Both types of procedures have the same objective: to provide impunity through cover ups."

Given this history and these doctrines how can anyone pretend to be surprised that the U.S. would use death squads to keep the population in Iraq?

THE BIPARTISAN CONSENSUS: FEWER US TROOPS, HARSHER CONTROL

Newsweek presents the "Salvador Option" as an extreme position being advocated and explored by neo-conservatives at the Pentagon. But in reality, the "Salvador Option" reflects a position long advocated by Democrats -- turning over more of the military operations to Iraqis in order to relieve the burden on U.S. troops. The Democrats have simply avoided discussing what kinds of forces and operations would really be necessary for the so-called "Iraqi government" to put down the insurgenc.

Indeed, there is reason to believe that a Kerry administration might have advanced a subtler version of the "Salvador Option." During the campaign, Kerry proposed a significant expansion of U.S. Special Forces. (See my October 4 aricle in Counterpuch.) To the public this conjured up

images of crack battalions of Chuck Norris-like soldiers. But anyone familiar with the real mission and nature of U.S. Special Forces knows that essentially this would have meant leveraging military resources to use "trainers" and "advisors" to set up local forces that could engage in "dirty war" tactics too controverial for the U.S. to engage in directly.

ARE THERE ALREADY DEATH SQUADS IN IRAQ?

Indeed, reading the Newsweek report, I found myself asking -- is the Pentagon really just now beginning to implement a death squad strategy in Iraq? Unanswered questions about the abductions of Simona Torretta and Nicholas Berg in Iraq last year lead me to wonder whether the death squads are already up and running.

McClintock cites the following passage from a 1962 Psychological Operations manual:

"Civilians in the operational area may be supporting their own government or collaborating with an enemy occupation force. An isolation program designed to instill doubt and fear may be carried out, and a positive political action program designed to elicit active support of the guerrillas also may be effected. If these programs fail, it may become necessary to take more aggressive action in the form of harsh treatment or even abductions. The abduction and harsh treatment of key enemy civilians can weaken the collaborators' belief in the strength and power of their military forces. This approach, fraught with propaganda and political dangers, should be used only after all other appeal means have failed. And when used, they [sic] must be made to appear as though initiated and effected by the guerrillas themselves to reduce the possibility of reprisals against civilians."

He also cites an Army intelligence officer with experience in Vietnam who suggested in the following tactic in a 1966 study on counterinsurgency and psychological warfare:

"Using a pseudo-insurgent force, the govemment generates incidents among the population. These incidents are used to indicate to the people the need for government-sponsored population control for protection of the villagers."

There is an uncanny resonance between these passages and the circumstances surrounding the kidnapping of Simona Toretta. Toretta was a staff person for an Italian NGO that opposed the U.S. war in Iraq, and had done work in Baghdad during the sanctions and the bombing. In early September, Toretta and three collegues were kidnapped by alleged Iraqi militants. But too many of the pieces of the story just don't fit. Jeremy Scahill and Naomi Klein, who had met Toretta in Iraq, reported in the Guardian on September 16 2004 that:

"Nothing about this kidnapping fits the pattern of other abductions. Most are opportunistic attacks on treacherous stretches of road. Torretta and her colleagues were coldly hunted down in their home. And while mujahideen in Iraq scrupulously hide their identities, making sure to wrap their faces in scarves, these kidnappers were bare-faced and clean-shaven, some in business suits. One assailant was addressed by the others as 'sir'

"Kidnap victims have overwhelmingly been men, yet three of these four are women. Witnesses say the gunmen questioned staff in the building until the Simonas were identified by name, and that Mahnouz Bassam, an Iraqi woman, was dragged screaming by her headscarf, a shocking religious transgression for an attack supposedly carried out in the name of Islam.

"Most extraordinary was the size of the operation: rather than the usual three or four fighters, 20 armed men pulled up to the house in broad daylight, seemingly unconcerned about being caught. Only blocks from the heavily patrolled Green Zone, the whole operation went off with no interference from Iraqi police or US military - although Newsweek reported that "about 15 minutes afterwards, an American Humvee convoy passed hardly a block away.

"And then there were the weapons. The attackers were armed with automatic rifles, pump-action shotguns, pistols with silencers and stun guns - hardly the mujahideen's standard-issue rusty Kalashnikovs. Strangest of all is this detail: witnesses said that several attackers wore Iraqi National Guard uniforms and identified themselves as working for Ayad Allawi, the interim prime minister.

"An Iraqi government spokesperson denied that Allawi's office was involved. But Sabah Kadhim, a spokesperson for the interior ministry, conceded that the kidnappers'were wearing military uniforms and flak jackets.'"

Aside from the names and locations it sounds like the story of a paramilitary kidnapping in Iraq.

They go on to explain that:

" [Toretta's organization,] A Bridge to Baghdad has been unapologetic in its opposition to the occupation regime. During the siege of Falluja in April, it coordinated risky humanitarian missions. US forces had sealed the road to Falluja and banished the press as they prepared to punish the entire city for the gruesome killings of four Blackwater mercenaries. In August, when US marines laid siege to Najaf, A Bridge to Baghdad again went where the occupation forces wanted no witnesses. And the day before their kidnapping, Torretta and Pari told Kubaisi that they were planning yet another high-risk mission to Falluja."

These details were reported in the Italian press but were ignored by the U.S. media. They provide strong circumstantial evidence that the kidnapping was an attempt to frighten groups like A Bridge to Baghdad out of sticking their noses into U.S. military business, and to scare other aid agencies into either collaborating more closely with security forces or pulling out of Iraq.

Several months earlier, in a widely publicized incident that drew attention away from the Abu Ghraib prison scandal (and was used by many commentators to tacitly support the torture of Iraqi prisoners,) Nicholas Berg, a 26 year old telecommunications contractor from Pennsylvania was kidnapped and beheaded. Before his kidnapping, Berg had been held and questioned by U.S. and Iraqi authorities. [update] Before his kidnapping, Berg had been held and questioned by U.S. and Iraqi authorities. The FBI offered Berg safe passage out of Iraq before releasing him, but Berg turned down the offer because he wanted to stay in the country a bit later. He was abducted several days later. .

This could just be a coincidence. On the other hand, from Alabama sheriffs with ties to the Ku Klux Klan to Colombian soldiers with the AUC, [update] there is a long history of security forces taking people into custody and then releasing them, giving paramilitary groups a chance to kidnap and murder them. The appearance of "guilt" can be a sufficient motive for a vigilante killing by death squads. .

Then there is the fact that, as numerous Bloggers have reported, [update] Berg's company was on an enemies list compiled by the right-wing hate group Free Republic, because Berg's father had signed a newspaper ad condemning the war in Iraq, and the ad had identified him as an employee of the company his son founded. Ironically, Nick Berg supported the U.S. occupation of Iraq. The same compassion for the Iraqi people that motivated his father, Michael's opposition to the war, motivated Nick to go to Iraq to attempt to take part in the reconstruction, working as a private telecommunications contractor. There are many Free Republic members in the U.S. military and the group is known for its violent, threatening rhetoric and its harrassment of its "enemies." There is also a long history of right wing paramilitaries deeming people "guilty by association" and committing reprisals against the family members of perceived dissidents.

The gruesome manner in which Nicholas Berg was murdered also reflects a mode of operation common to U.S. -backed death squads. death squads tend to use the most brutal and gruesome methods available to them in order to instill fear in others. McClintock cites Psychological Operations and Counterinsurgency training materials published by the Army in the mid 1960's that suggest that, by insurgents in order to increase people's fear of the insurgency and support for the governmen, in some cases death squads should make it look like their victimst were killed by insurgents. Given the erosion of trust in U.S. forces following the disclosure of the torture at Abu Ghraib prison it is entirely possible that Nick may have been killed in such a brutal and public way in order to create a deep fear of the insurgency that would tacitly justify the torture of suspected insurgents and in order to create the sense that when the media disclosed torture by U.S. forces they put U.S. nationals at risk. The confusion created by the mention of Nick's company's name on the Free Republic list might have helped the killers to justify their actions to themselves. The terror and outrage that Nick's murder caused may in turn have inspired actual insurgents to use the same method to carry out copycat crimes to create a similar effect for very different reasons.

There is not enough evidence to decisevely pin the kidnappings of Toretta and Berg on paramilitaries -- but both cases raise disturbing questions. And if either of them was targeted by paramilitaries we can assume that there have been dozens of unknown Iraqi victims as well.

Which brings us back to the one other strange aspect of the Newsweek story. The reporters never asked why the Pentagon was giving them this information. Presumably they assumed that their sources were whistleblowers appalled by the proposal. But another possibility seems equally likely, if not more likely -- the Pentagon may already have implemented "the Salvador Option" and the leak may be part of a strategy to test the waters of publlic opinion regarding the strategy and to diffuse the impact of eventual revelations of U.S.-backed death squad activity in Iraq.

Once again, Newsweek has failed to do anything more than report a story handed to it on a silver platter.



http://narcosphere.narconews.com/story/2005/1/13/141143/259

Sick strategies for senseless slaughter
John Kaminski

The murderous fools are not trying to end the war;

they're trying to keep it going as long as they can

May 24, 2005

The cat is out of the bag now.

It happened quite by accident, as most revelations do. And it is seen by most of the world as the most revolting of the American/Israeli atrocities in the past few years, although it's hard to prioritize that claim because of the level and frequency of barbaric acts that are committed on a regular basis by those affluent automatons who call themselves the good guys.

Yet everyone but the comatose American populace — blinded by its Orwellian media and stupefied by its demented diet of physical and mental poisons — can see it.

So permit me to spell it out for those cowardly people who say they're living in the freest country on Earth, but absolutely refuse in their silent ignorance to see the blood they're spilling. No country that condones deliberate torture for any reason can ever be trusted.

The first hint came in Imad Khadduri's "A warning to car drivers" written in Arabic and posted on www.albasrah.net on May 11.
The dispatch was quickly picked up by two of the most realistic and reliable news sites on the Web, www.uruknet.info , which I try to read every day,
and www.globalresearch.ca , which I try to read every week, since it offers less breaking and more analytical news. I consider these two sites essential to keeping up with the real news of the world, and highly recommend that you monitor them, too.

Khadduri recounted a scam that opens up a clear window to seeing who is perpetrating all this inexplicable violence in Iraq. Beyond the American attempt to pacify an outraged and abused nation through demonic destruction, and beyond the Iraqi attempt to resist this totalitarian takeover by a foreign conqueror, there are more than numerous acts of violence that simply can't be understood by straightforward explanations.

I mean, when a mosque blows up and Americans blame Islamic terrorists, whether Sunni or Shiite, it makes no sense. Muslims never blow up their own houses of worship. Or when reporters sympathetic to either the Iraqi cause of freedom, or even just general principles of international justice, are suddenly assassinated and the blame is placed on often imaginary Islamic extremists whose perspective is supported by these writers, how can anyone believe that Muslims did it, even thought this is what the Zionist American press and government continue to insist.

So who's doing all these demented deeds? As if we didn't know ....

Khadduri's report went like this:

"A few days ago, an American manned check point confiscated the driver license of a driver and told him to report to an American military camp near Baghdad airport for interrogation and in order to retrieve his license. The next day, the driver did visit the camp and he was allowed in the camp with his car. He was admitted to a room for an interrogation that lasted half an hour. At the end of the session, the American interrogator told him: 'OK, there is nothing against you, but you do know that Iraq is now sovereign and is in charge of its own affairs. Hence, we have forwarded your papers and license to al-Kadhimia police station for processing. Therefore, go there with this clearance to reclaim your license. At the police station, ask for Lt. Hussain Mohammed, who is waiting for you now. Go there now quickly, before he leaves his shift work".

The driver did leave in a hurry, but was soon alarmed with a feeling that his car was driving as if carrying a heavy load, and he also became suspicious of a low flying helicopter that kept hovering overhead, as if trailing him. He stopped the car and inspected it carefully. He found nearly 100 kilograms of explosives hidden in the back seat and along the two back doors.

The only feasible explanation for this incident is that the car was indeed booby trapped by the Americans and intended for the al-Khadimiya Shiite district of Baghdad. The helicopter was monitoring his movement and witnessing the anticipated "hideous attack by foreign elements".

The same scenario was repeated in Mosul, in the north of Iraq. A car was confiscated along with the driver's license. He did follow up on the matter and finally reclaimed his car but was told to go to a police station to reclaim his license. Fortunately for him, the car broke down on the way to the police station. The inspecting car mechanic discovered that the spare tire was fully laden with explosives."

If this were the only example of this type I heard, I might have let it pass as just a story. But it wasn't.

There was also the sorry tale of the Iraqi man who saw American soldiers plant a bomb which shortly thereafter exploded, and when he said so out loud for all to hear, he was hauled away, never to be seen again.

This story was reported on arguably the most authentic and riveting source of news from Iraq, the heart-rending "Baghdad Burning: Girl Blog from Iraq," which is compiled by someone known only as Riverbend or Iraqi Girl < http://riverbendblog.blogspot.com/ >. Again, recommended reading.

She recounts, "the last two weeks have been violent ....

The number of explosions in Baghdad alone is frightening. There have also been several assassinations — bodies being found here and there. It's somewhat disturbing to know that corpses are turning up in the most unexpected places. Many people will tell you it's not wise to eat river fish anymore because they have been nourished on the human remains being dumped into the river. That thought alone has given me more than one sleepless night. It is almost as if Baghdad has turned into a giant graveyard.

The latest corpses were those of some Sunni and Shia clerics — several of them well-known. People are being patient and there is a general consensus that these killings are being done to provoke civil war. Also worrisome is the fact that we are hearing of people being rounded up by security forces (Iraqi) and then being found dead days later — apparently when the new Iraqi government recently decided to reinstate the death penalty, they had something else in mind.

But back to the explosions. One of the larger blasts was in an area called Ma'moun, which is a middle class area located in west Baghdad. It's a relatively calm residential area with shops that provide the basics and a bit more. It happened in the morning, as the shops were opening up for their daily business and it occurred right in front of a butcher's shop. Immediately after, we heard that a man living in a house in front of the blast site was hauled off by the Americans because it was said that after the bomb went off, he sniped an Iraqi National Guardsman.

I didn't think much about the story — nothing about it stood out: an explosion and a sniper — hardly an anomaly. The interesting news started circulating a couple of days later. People from the area claim that the man was taken away not because he shot anyone, but because he knew too much about the bomb. Rumor has it that he saw an American patrol passing through the area and pausing at the bomb site minutes before the explosion. Soon after they drove away, the bomb went off and chaos ensued. He ran out of his house screaming to the neighbors and bystanders that the Americans had either planted the bomb or seen the bomb and done nothing about it. He was promptly taken away.

The bombs are mysterious. Some of them explode in the midst of National Guard and near American troops or Iraqi Police and others explode near mosques, churches, and shops or in the middle of sougs. One thing that surprises us about the news reports of these bombs is that they are inevitably linked to suicide bombers. The reality is that some of these bombs are not suicide bombs — they are car bombs that are either being remotely detonated or maybe time bombs. All we know is that the techniques differ and apparently so do the intentions. Some will tell you they are resistance. Some say Chalabi and his thugs are responsible for a number of them. Others blame Iran and the SCIRI militia Badir.

In any case, they are terrifying. If you're close enough, the first sound is a that of an earsplitting blast and the sounds that follow are of a rain of glass, shrapnel and other sharp things. Then the wails begin — the shrill mechanical wails of an occasional ambulance combined with the wail of car alarms from neighboring vehicles... and finally the wail of people trying to sort out their dead and dying from the debris.

Then there was this one.

On May 13, 2005, a 64 years old Iraqi farmer, Haj Haidar Abu Sijjad, took his tomato load in his pickup truck from Hilla to Baghdad, accompanied by Ali, his 11 years old grandson. They were stopped at an American check point and were asked to dismount. An American soldier climbed on the back of the pickup truck, followed by another a few minutes later, and thoroughly inspected the tomato filled plastic containers for about 10 minutes. Haj Haidar and his grandson were then allowed to proceed to Baghdad.

A minute later, his grandson told him that he saw one of the American soldiers putting a grey melon size object in the back among the tomato containers. The Haj immediately slammed on the brakes and stopped the car at the side of the road, at a relatively far distance from the check point. He found a time bomb with the clock ticking tucked among his tomatoes. He immediately recognized it, as he was an ex-army soldier. Panicking, he grabbed his grandson and ran away from the car. Then, realizing that the car was his only means of work, he went back, took the bomb and carried it in fear. He threw it in a deep ditch by the side of the road that was dug by Iraqi soldiers in preparation for the war, two years ago.

Upon returning from Baghdad, he found out that the bomb had indeed exploded, killing three sheep and injuring their shepherd in his head. He thanked God for giving him the courage to go back and remove the bomb, and for the luck in that the American soldiers did not notice his sudden stop at a distance and his getting rid of the bomb.

"They intended it to explode in Baghdad and claim that it is the work of the 'terrorists', or 'insurgents' or who call themselves the 'Resistance'.

I decided to expose them and asked your reporter to take me to Baghdad to tell you the story. They are to be exposed as they now want to sow strife in Iraq and taint the Resistance after failing to defeat it militarily.
Do not forget to mention my name. I fear nobody but God, as I am a follower of Muqtada al-Sadir."

The background and admission of guilt for such satanic shenanigans was clearly outlined in Frank Morales' piece on globalresearch.ca: *"The Provocateur State: Is the CIA Behind the Iraqi 'Insurgents' — and Global Terrorism,"* by Frank Morales < http://globalresearch.ca/articles/MOR505A.htm l> clearly demonstrates how Donald Rumsfeld said he was going to do exactly what these three sorry episodes show he actually did.

Morales writes:

Back in 2002, following the trauma of 9-11, Secretary of Defense Donald H. Rumsfeld predicted there would be more terrorist attacks against the American people and civilization at large. How could he be so sure of that? Perhaps because these attacks would be instigated on the order of the Honorable Mr. Rumsfeld. According to Los Angeles Times military analyst William Arkin, writing Oct. 27, 2002, Rumsfeld set out to create a secret army, "a super-Intelligence Support Activity" network that would "bring together CIA and military covert action, information warfare, intelligence, and cover and deception," to stir the pot of spiraling global violence.

We never got the full story on those ghastly beheadings of Nick Berg and others. Nor have we ever understood who killed the American mercenaries in Fallujah that eventually precipitated one of the great slaughters in history. Nor have we ever been able to discern if Abu Musab al-Zarqawi is actually a real person or just another bin Ladenesque boogeyman. Nor if the al-Qaeda website which claims responsibility for various atrocities is not really run by the CIA.

Provoking this type of violence also further conceals the sinister genocide the Israelis continue to perpetrate on the hapless Palestinians, which is exactly its point, as is the entire Iraq invasion and destruction, and as was the inside job mass murder on 9/11 in New York City. The purpose of all these despicable acts is to conceal what the Israelis and the Americans have been doing all along to the entire Arab world, namely enslaving and destroying it.

There is not now nor ever was an Arab terror threat. That was all invented by Rothschild, Rockefeller, Kissinger, Brzezinski, Bush, Cheney, Sharon, Zakheim, Perle, Wolfowitz, Feith, Abrams and Warren Buffett. These people are all traitors to not only their countries but to humanity in general, and should all be slammed and RICOed into Guantanamo immediately.

And so should the government officials, media lackeys, and ordinary citizens who, by their complicity or their ignorance, support them.

The main point in understanding these deliberate provocations to prevent peace is to understand how the American capitalist system, now hijacked by billionaires with no trace of conscience, thrives on war and profits from the misery of others.

The neocon murder menace has been for months ratcheting up the hyperbole about why we need to invade Iran — which some predict will happen in June — and just this week, rumors of troop movements in the Caribbean and lockdowns at Florida military bases appear to augur an imminent invasion of oil-producing Venezuela.

The overall plan is to create hell on Earth, and we are succeeding. By our silent complicity and cowardly reluctance to oppose and stop this homicidal behavior in the name of profit, we are all accessories to mass murder and the destruction of human society, not to even mention the extinction of individual human freedom and the God-given right to be safe and secure in the homes of our choice.

So now that you know, what are you going to do about it? You know if you do nothing, these same things will one day happen to you.

John Kaminski
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John Kaminski is a writer whose Internet essays are seen on hundreds of websites around the world. These stories have been compiled into two anthologies, "America's Autopsy Report" and "The Perfect Enemy." In addition, he has written "The Day America Died: Why You Shouldn't Believe the Official Story of What Happened on September 11, 2001," a booklet written for those who still believe the government's cynical lies about that tragic day. All three books are available at http://www.johnkaminski.com/

www.uruknet.info?p=15949

Crying Wolf: Media Disinformation and Death Squads in Occupied Iraq

By Max Fuller

November 10, 2005

Abstract

The phenomenon of death squads operating in Iraq has become generally accepted over recent months. However, in its treatment of the issue, the mainstream media has zealously followed a line of attributing extrajudicial killings to unaccountable Shia militias who have risen to prominence with the electoral victory of Ibramhim Jafaari's Shia-led government in January. The following article examines both the way in which the information has been widely presented and whether that presentation has any actual basis in fact. Concluding that the attribution to Shia militias is unsustainable, the article considers who the intellectual authors of these crimes against humanity are and what purpose they serve in the context of the ongoing occupation of the country.

Shortly before dawn on 14 September 2005, just hours before a huge bomb exploded in Baghdad killing 88 labourers, around 50 men in army uniforms arrived at the village of Taji 16km north of Baghdad in military vehicles, bearing military identification. After searching the village, they seized 17 local men, described by one witness as vegetable sellers, ice sellers and taxi drivers. Handcuffed and blindfolded, the men were led from their homes before being shot in the head in the main square (Newsday, Al Jazeera, Juan Cole).

Such killings represent a pattern of violence as frightening as and perhaps more systematic than the steady wave of bombings targeting civilians in occupied Iraq. Whilst the pattern of death-squad-style executions is broadly recognised, it remains badly understood and, in its representation, deeply distorted.

The appearance of death squads was first highlighted in May this year, when over a 10-day period dozens of bodies were found casually disposed of in rubbish dumps and vacant areas around Baghdad. All of the victims had been handcuffed, blindfolded and shot in the head and many of them also showed signs of having been brutally tortured. On 5 May 15 bodies were discovered in an industrial area called Kasra-Wa-Atash and subsequently identified as belonging to a group of farmers seized from a Baghdad market. The bodies revealed such torture marks as broken skulls, burning, beatings and right eyeballs removed. Witnesses claimed the men had been arrested by members of the security forces (BBC, Guardian). Less than two weeks later, 15 more bodies were found at two sites (KUNA). According to the chairman of the Sunni Waqf court, Adnan Muhammad Salman, the victims were Sunnis who had been arrested at their homes or at mosques (ArabicNews.com).

The evidence was sufficiently compelling for the Association of Muslim Scholars (AMS), a leading Sunni organisation, to issue public statements in which they accused the security forces attached to the Ministry of the Interior as well as the Badr Brigade, the former armed wing of the Supreme Council for Islamic Revolution in Iraq (SCIRI), of being behind the killings. They also accused the Ministry of the Interior of conducting state terrorism (Financial Times).

Since then, a steady stream of the victims of extrajudicial killings has flowed through the Baghdad morgue. Characteristically, the victims' hands are tied or handcuffed behind their backs and they have been blindfolded. In most cases they also appear to have been whipped with a cord, subjected to electric shocks or beaten with a blunt object and shot to death, often with single bullets to the head. Yasser Salihee, a journalist for Knight Ridder investigating the bodies, wrote that eyewitnesses claimed many of the victims were seized by men wearing commando uniforms in white Toyota Land Cruisers with police markings. (Knight Ridder). Salihee's last article was published on 27 June, three days after he was fatally shot by a US sniper at a routine checkpoint.

It is impossible to know exactly how many people are being killed in this way. Salihee reported that more than 30 examples occurred in less than a week, while Faik Baqr, director of Baghdad's central morgue, states that before the occupation of Iraq, the morgue handled 200 to 250 suspicious deaths a month, of which perhaps 16 had firearm injuries. Now the figure is between 700 and 800, with some 500 firearm wounds (*op. cit.*). The Independent's Robert Fisk adds that there are so many bodies that human remains are stacked on top of each other and unidentified bodies are rapidly disposed of (Robert Fisk).

The killings have not been confined to Baghdad. For example, on 24 June six farmers were taken from the village of Hashmiyat 15km west of Baquba by men in army uniform; their decapitated bodies were found soon afterwards a mile from their homes (Associated Press). More recently, on 8 September, 18 people were abducted from the town of Iskandriyah 40km south of the capital by men in National Guard Uniforms and executed in isolated open land (Xinhuanet). These few examples represent the tip of a rapidly expanding iceberg, with the majority of extrajudicial-style killings seriously under-investigated and underreported.

In response to the accusations of police involvement, drawing on eyewitness accounts, Iraq's new Ministry of the Interior claims that it is easy to get hold of police uniforms and that the killings are the work of 'insurgents' masquerading as security forces in order to create sectarian divisions (BBC). Such denials are echoed by US special advisor to the ministry Steven Casteel, who has stated that, 'The small numbers that we've investigated we've found to be either rumor or innuendo' (Salihee, *op. cit.*).

Despite such denials, few journalists have been able to dismiss what the Observer's foreign editor Peter Beaumont describes as the 'extraordinary sense of impunity with which these abductions and killings take place' as mere innuendo (Observer), or the consistent eye-witness accounts of the kidnappers appearing with expensive foreign equipment issued to the security forces, such as the Toyota Land Cruisers and the Glock 9mm pistols, as simply rumour (Salihee, *op. cit.*). The Interior Ministry's explanation of large, heavily armed groups of resistance fighters moving freely about the capital becomes even less plausible when one considers that many of the killings took place following the onset of Operation Lightning/Thunder in late May. This divisional-size operation saw the deployment of 40,000 Iraqi troops, who sealed Baghdad and installed 675 checkpoints around the city (Associated Press). Hundreds of arrests followed as the security forces began to 'hunt down insurgents' (BBC). According to the AMS, in one instance, on 13 July, dozens of Interior Ministry commandos stormed several houses in northern Baghdad and detained 13 people, before torturing and killing them in a nearby apartment (Gulf Daily News).

However, instead of placing the blame squarely on the apparatus of the new Iraqi state, the mainstream media has almost exclusively chosen to shift the emphasis away, resorting to a number of standardised literary devices. The first device is to frame extrajudicial killings in the context of a wider panoply of supposed retaliatory sectarian violence. For example, Francis Curta of the Associated French Press writes that 'A series of tit-for-tat killings has raised sectarian tension to boiling points' (eg. Mail&Guardian Online), Mohamad Bazzi writing for Newsday refers to a 'wave of retaliatory killings' (Newsday), and James Hider of the London Times believes that 'the only certainty is that once [the bodies] are identified, someone will want revenge' (Times Online). The second device is to state or imply that the security forces are closely associated with largely unaccountable Shia militias, especially the Badr Brigade. For instance, Patrick Cockburn of the UK Independent writes that 'Some carrying out the attacks appear to belong to the 12,000-

strong paramilitary police commandos', while, in almost the same breath he adds that 'Fear of Shia death squads, perhaps secretly controlled by the Badr Brigade, the leading Shia militia, frightens the Sunni' (Independent); in a similar vein, the BBC claims that 'Angry mourners at a funeral for some of those killed said they had died at the hands of police and Shia militiamen' (BBC).

Most importantly, reports variously stress that the government, Interior Ministry and police are under sectarian Shia control. Hence, Samir Haddad, a correspondent for Islam Online, refers to the 'dominant-Shiite newly-formed security forces' (Islam Online), the Chicago Tribune's Liz Sly states that Sunnis 'accused Iraq's security forces, now controlled by the Shiite-led government' (Chicago Tribune), Tom Lasseter, writing for the Inquirer, claims that 'Badr members have gained unprecedented authority' and that the Interior Minister, who controls the nation's police and commando forces, is a former Supreme Council official with close ties to Badr' (Philadelphia Inquirer), the Observer's Beaumont writes that 'Accountability has also become more opaque since the formation of the Shia-dominated government' (*op. cit.*), the BBC's Richard Galpin states that the 'Sunni community in particular claims it is being targeted by the Shia-dominated police force' (BBC), Anthony Loyd for the London Times talks of 'allegations of extensive extra-judicial killings of Sunnis by the Shia-dominated Iraqi security forces' (Times Online) and Sinan Salaheddin of the Associated Press, states 'The grisly finds have led Sunnis to believe that Shiite Muslims who dominate the government and the Interior Ministry are waging a quiet, deadly campaign against them' (eg. Seattle Post-Intelligencer).

Other devices include mentioning the Interior Ministry's claims of insurgents donning police or commando uniforms or implying that if the security forces are involved in torture and murder it is a reflection of the fact that it is composed of reconstituted members of the former state who know only a culture of violence and intimidation; this is clearly at odds with those reports that regard the security forces as entirely Shia dominated. Wilder devices talk about security forces' frustration or blame Zarqawi for attempting to inflame sectarian tensions. Whilst all of these devices are employed in various combinations, notably absent from every account is any serious examination of the new Iraqi state or, assiduously avoided, the role of the occupying powers, leaving the most thoughtful of journalist to wonder with Beaumont whether the Iraqi state is 'stumbling towards a policy of institutionalised torture' or whether human-rights abuses are conducted by 'rogue elements' within the security apparatus (Salihee's investigation represents the one exception, with the emphasis placed firmly on the organs of the state, supported by solid primary evidence).

Police Commandos and Disinformation Brigades

An instructive starting point for an examination of the prevailing media consensus is to consider some of the forces of the Iraqi state most closely associated with allegations of serious human rights abuses.

The majority of accusations are general. Journalists refer to the police, security forces, the National Guard or to poorly identified police commandos, but specific accusations have been made against a unit known as the Wolf Brigade. The identification of the Wolf Brigade with cases of abduction, torture and execution in Baghdad was first made on 16 May, when Mothana Harith Al-Dari, a spokesman for the AMS, stated that 'The mass killings and the crackdown and detention campaigns in north-eastern Baghdad over the past two days by members of the Iraqi police or by an Interior Ministry special force, known as the Wolf Brigade, are part of a state terror policy', in relation to the discoveries of the victims of extrajudicial executions noted above (Islam Online).

Within days a Knight Ridder journalist, Hannah Allam, had published under a variety of titles an article about the Wolf Brigade, highlighting their maverick tough-guy image and presenting their leader, who goes by the *nom de guerre* of Abul Waleed, as a devout Shiite, 'complete with a photo of Imam Ali and religious chants programmed into his constantly ringing cell phone.' (Knight

Ridder). Allam informed readers that Waleed regarded the AMS as infidels and tossed their accusations of torture and murder into the bin. Additionally, readers learned that the unit was formed as the brainchild of Waleed in October 2004, saw its first action in Mosul after nearly two months' training with US forces, and is behind the inhuman television programme *Terrorists in the Grip of Justice*, in which tortured detainees are forced to confess to a lurid array of crimes (Associated Press). However, whilst belittling charges of horrendous human-rights violations as 'the usual complaints', Allam made no reference to the Wolf Brigade being a special forces unit attached to the Interior Ministry.

On 9 June rightwing US think tank the Council for Foreign Relations published a paper devoted to Iraqi militias (CFR), simultaneously repeated in the *New York Times*. In a series of FAQ-type entries, the report reiterated many of Allam's insights about the Wolf Brigade, as well as offering some additional tidbits:

> *What is the Wolf Brigade?*
> The most feared and effective commando unit in Iraq, experts say. Formed last October by a former three-star Shiite general and SCIRI member who goes by the nom de guerre Abu Walid, the Wolf Brigade is composed of roughly 2,000 fighters, mostly young, poor Shiites from Sadr City.

However, the paper went further in emphasising the units' sectarian Shiite character, stating that 'One of Badr's recent offshoots is a feared, elite commando unit linked to the Iraqi Interior Ministry called the Wolf Brigade', and spelling out the distinction between it and other, Sunni militia-style units.

> *Are there any Sunni-led commando units?*
> Yes. At least one counterinsurgency unit is headed by a former officer of Saddam Hussein's Baath Party. The Special Police Commandos, like the Wolf Brigade, have a reputation for brutality, but the group is also considered one of Iraq's most effective and well-disciplined counterinsurgency units.

Those familiar with Peter Maas's article 'The Way of the Commandos', published by *The New York Times Magazine* just six weeks earlier, will recognise that, in fact, the Wolf Brigade bears a striking similarity to the unit he identifies as the Special Police Commandos. The Police Commandos, too, were formed in autumn 2004 and saw one of their first major commitments in Mosul in November; like the Wolf Brigade, their leader also founded an unspeakably vile television show called *Terrorism in the Grip of Justice*.

But there are fundamental distinctions between these units as well. The Police Commandos were founded on the initiative of then Interior Minister Falah al-Naqib, the son of a former Iraqi Chief of Staff, believed by many to have been a major CIA asset (National Review Online), under the command of his uncle, an ex-Baathist, Sunni military intelligence officer and CIA coup-plotter called Adnan Thabit. Its recruits are drawn from former members of the special forces and Republican Guard, with mixed ethnic and religious background (Washington Post), while its chain of command is said to be largely Sunni. Most importantly, the Police Commandos were formed under the experienced tutelage and oversight of veteran US counterinsurgency fighters, and from the outset conducted joint-force operations with elite and highly secretive US special-forces units (Reuters, National Review Online).

A key figure in the development of the Special Police Commandos was James Steele, a former US Army special forces operative who cut his teeth in Vietnam before moving on to direct the US military mission in El Salvador at the height of that country's civil war. Steele was responsible for selecting and training the small units (or death squads) who were boasted to have inflicted 60% of the casualties caused in that 'counterinsurgency' campaign (Manwaring, *El Salvador at War*, 1988, p 306-8). Principally, the tens of thousands of victims were civilians.

Another US contributor was the same Steven Casteel who as the most senior US advisor within the Interior Ministry brushed off serious and well-substantiated accusations of appalling human

right violations as 'rumor and innuendo'. Like Steele, Casteel gained considerable experience in Latin America, in his case participating in the hunt for the cocaine baron Pablo Escobar in Colombia's Drugs Wars of the 1990s, as well as working alongside local forces in Peru and Bolivia (Maas *op. cit.*). Whilst Casteel's background is said to be Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA), the operation against Escobar was a joint intelligence effort, involving the CIA, DEA, Delta Force and a top-secret military intelligence surveillance unit knows as Centra Spike (Marihemp, SpecWarNet). The operation had no impact on Colombia's position as the world's major source of cocaine (which, incidentally or not, owed much to the CIA, who had became heavily involved in the trade as part of their secret funding of Nicaragua's Contra mercenary army; for a detailed account, read the series *Dark Alliance*, originally published by the San Jose Mercury News), with the centre of gravity ultimately shifting to dozens of micro cartels (Houston Chronicle). However, the operation did lead to the formation of a death squad known as Los Pepes, which was to form the nucleus for Colombia's present paramilitary death-squad umbrella organisation, the AUC, responsible for over 80 percent of the country's most serious human-rights abuses (Colombia Journal). Whilst no official connection was ever admitted, Los Pepes relied on the intelligence data held in the fifth-floor steel vault at the US Embassy in Bogota that served as the operation's nerve centre. Lists of the death squad's victims rapidly came to mirror those of Escobar's associates collated at the embassy headquarters (Cocaine.org, Cannabis News).

Casteel's background is significant because this kind of intelligence-gathering support role and the production of death lists are characteristic of US involvement in counterinsurgency programs and constitute the underlying thread in what can appear to be random, disjointed killing sprees. Probably the best-attested example of such an operation is Indonesia during the early years of the Suharto dictatorship, when CIA officers provided the names of thousands of people, many of them members of the Indonesian Communist Party, to the army, who dutifully slaughtered them (Kathy Kadane). Similar cases can be made for the CIA supplying death lists and/or overseeing operations in Vietnam (OC Weekly), Guatemala, where death lists are known to have been compiled but were supposedly never acted upon (The Consortium), and El Salvador, where former killers have come forward to describe sharing desk space with US advisors who collected the 'intelligence' from 'heavy interrogation' but were spared details of the subsequent murders (Covert Action Quarterly). For an extensive list of countries in which the CIA has supported death squads, see the database compiled by Ralph McGehee (Serendipity).

Such centrally planned genocides are entirely consistent with what is taking place in Iraq today under the auspices of crackdowns like Operation Lightning, which make use of so-called Rapid Intrusion Brigades to make widespread, well orchestrated arrests (Financial Times). It is also consistent with what little we know about the Special Police Commandos, which was tailored to provide the Interior Ministry with a special-forces strike capability (US Department of Defense). In keeping with such a role, the Police Commando headquarters has become the hub of a nationwide command, control, communications, computer and intelligence operations centre, courtesy of the US (Defend America). Interestingly, supplying a state-of-the-art communications network to coordinate mass murder was part of the plan in Indonesia as well (Pilger, *The New Rulers of the World*, p 30); it is doubtless common practice.

Finally, we know that by 30 January of this year, the Police Commandos had six functioning brigades and in early April the *Al-Nimr* (Tiger) Brigade took over from the *Al-Dhib* (Wolf) Brigade in Mosul (UNAMI). Interestingly, one of the Police Commandos' first Brigade commanders was a Shiite, apparently called Rashid al-Halafi, but Maas noted that 'he was regarded warily by other Shiites because he held senior intelligence posts under Saddam Hussein'.

Untangling the Web

Clearly, the Wolf Brigade, though commonly treated in media reports as an autonomous entity, is actually one component of the Interior Ministry's Special Police Commandos. Abu Walid, identified occasionally as Brig. Gen. Mohammed Qureishi, is the brigade commander, under overall command of Adnan Thabit. Another figure linked with both the Wolf Brigade and Police Commandos is Major General Rashid Flayyih, variously identified as commander of the brigade

or the whole formation. If he can be identified with the brigade commander Rashid al-Halafi identified by Maas, it can be surmised that he has either been promoted or is another incarnation of Abu Walid.

Incredibly, I have not been able to find a single report written since accusations started to be made about the Wolf Brigade's involvement in the Baghdad killings that makes their identification with the Police Commandos clear, with journalists content to loosely refer to the unit as police commandos, as though there might be all sorts of police commando units. Though this might at first seem pedantic, the lack of clarity becomes even more incredible in the case of the 10 bricklayers suffocated in the back of a police van on 10 July (San Diego Union Tribune). To my knowledge, this remains the only case in which members of the security forces have been securely identified, with a survivor who had feigned death able to provide first-hand testimony. The unit responsible was the Wolf Brigade, but this information must be deduced from a reference in one article to the victims being taken to a police station at al Nisour Square (Knight Ridder) and Beaumont's mention that the Wolf Brigade is accused of running an interrogation centre as its Nissor Square headquarters (*op. cit.*). It seems that a nebulous Wolf Brigade linked to Badr, full of vengeful Shiite militiamen serves as a useful foil for allegations of 'state terrorism', but that when the accusations are sufficiently well-grounded, it is easier to keep it out of the spotlight for fear that a pattern of gross and systematic violations of human rights might start to emerge. The significance of this lies far beyond merely being able to expose sloppy journalistic practices, but actually reveals key characteristics of both the US imperial war machine and of the nature of their current occupation of Iraq.

With the finger of responsibility increasingly and inevitably pointing at well-organised counterinsurgency units operating from the Interior Ministry, one line of defence remains before intellectual authorship must be placed at the hands of the occupying powers. Since the election of 30 January and the transfer of office from the interim government of Ayad Allawi to the transitional one of Ibrahim Jafari in May, the mainstream media has unanimously chorused that power has fallen into the hands of Iraq's Shia majority. Most specifically, it is repeatedly claimed that the Interior Ministry and its security forces have come under the control of SCIRI and even that the Badr Brigades now wield considerable power within the ministry, with the new Interior Minister, Bayan Jabor, described as a former Badr member. The manifestation of this control lies in the policy of de-Baathification, a process that was halted under the interim government of Ayad Allawi, but that was considered fundamental by the incoming government. The policy was actively opposed by the US administration, which feared that experienced personnel (for which, read Washington's favourites) might be lost, especially within the security forces and intelligence apparatus (Washington Post).

According to Firas al-Nakib, a legal advisor at the Interior Ministry and a Sunni, 160 senior members of the Interior Ministry staff were rapidly dismissed and many police commanders were replaced with Shiites loyal to the Shiite bloc that won the elections (Knight Ridder). Yet, after speaking with Jabor, General Flayyih was reported to be reassured, with the former Badr member not only promising to support the Police Commandos (Financial Times), but calling for their rapid and more extensive deployment (Los Angeles Times). Flayyih's continuing tenure is particularly noteworthy, as, though a Shiite himself, Flayyih was in charge of the suppression of the Shia uprising in Nasiriya following the first Gulf War, and is, as such, a frontrunner in any serious Shia-led policy of de-Baathification. Like Flayyih, Adnan Thabit has retained a senior position, commanding all of the Interior Ministry's special forces (Multi-National Force - Iraq).

The issue of de-Baathification was recently addressed by Jabor, who explained that the discharge of personnel was handled by a general inspector and that recruitment was not influenced by sect (Al Mendhar). Backing up his statements, he pointed out that many senior security posts within the ministry were held by Sunnis, including that of deputy minister for intelligence affairs (also leader of the Interior Ministry's spy service), currently held by General Hussain Kamal.

In fact, the entire intelligence establishment is a creation of the Anglo-American secret services (Los Angeles Times), which began building at least as early as the beginning of the occupation (Detroit Free Press), although it may be suspected that the process was conceived long before.

The new Iraqi establishment was staffed by long-term CIA assets, such as General Mohammad Shahwani, who had been nurtured by the CIA since the late 1980s (Asia Times Online) and became director of the new National Intelligence Service (the *Mukhabarat*). Like Thabit and Flayyih, other old CIA hands, Shahwani had participated in attempted coups against the government of Iraq. Further agents (presumably existing intelligence assets for the most part) were recruited from Iraq's main political groups, consisting of SCIRI, the Dawa Party, the two main Kurdish parties, the Iraqi National Congress and the Iraqi National Accord. These agents became the Collection, Management and Analysis Directorate (CMAD), whose principal job was to 'turn raw intelligence into targets that could be used in operations' (Detroit Free Press, *op. cit.*). Initially, 'operations' were carried out by a paramilitary unit composed of militia from the five main parties, who, under the supervision of US commanders, worked with US special forces to track down 'insurgents' (Washington Post). As the new Iraqi state apparatus developed, CMAD was split between the ministries of Defence and Interior, with an 'elite corps' creamed off to form the National Intelligence Service (Detroit Free Press, *op. cit.*). To oversee all three bodies, the National Intelligence Coordination Committee was established, headed, as National Security Advisor (appointed in April 2004), by Mowaffak Rubaie. This 'leading Shiite moderate' had been a spokesman for the Dawa Party in the 1980s when it was a serious terrorist organisation targeting Iraq, before moving on to help coordinate the Iraqi opposition from London (Asia Times Online, *op. cit.*). In London he worked with the Khoei Foundation, a pro-US charitable organisation that has distributed money for the CIA and is linked with the National Endowment for Democracy through Prime minister Jaafari's advisor Laith Kuba, another long-term CIA asset (Village Voice).

These new intelligence agencies supply the data for the Interior Ministry to make arrests. A graphic and harrowing account of such arrests on 27 June 2004 was provided by UPI's P. Mitchell Prothero, in what he describes as the 'welcome arrival of frontier-style law enforcement'. Prothero described how local residents 'seemed shocked' as their doors were broken in and 'men were dragged from their homes dishevelled and screaming' by members of a SWAT team in central Baghdad. The raid had been planned for months by General Kamal's intelligence agency within the Interior Ministry and the names of more than 100 detainees were checked against prepared lists (Washington Times). Prothero witnessed many of those detainees 'worked over' with metal batons and lengths of hose in the backs of vans, but the most serious abuse came later, within the Interior Ministry compound. On 29 June members of the Oregon National Guard swept into the grounds of the Interior Ministry and disarmed plain-clothed Iraqi policemen whom they had observed beating bound and blindfolded prisoners (Oregonian). The US soldiers began to administer first aid to the prisoners, who had also been starved of food and water for three days; many were clearly in a very serious condition. Steven Casteel was called to help deal with the situation (Boston Globe). After hours of negotiations, the soldiers unwillingly withdrew, leaving the victims in the hands of their torturers. Perhaps their ultimate fate will never be known, but as Casteel commented, 'There's always a pendulum between freedom and security'.

Like Thabit and Flayyih, Shahwani has retained his position under the transitional government and continues to report directly to the CIA (Seattle Times). Clearly, however, the purpose of stating or implying that unaccountable militias are behind the extrajudicial executions and/or that sectarian rivalries, especially Shia control of the Interior Ministry (which, as Beaumont correctly points out, is the centre of the horror), are to blame, is to distance the US from the almost unthinkable ongoing crimes against humanity. Comparable disinformation strategies have been employed in every counterinsurgency conflict with which the US has been involved; it is known as establishing 'plausible deniability'. For example, in Colombia, where the US as been deeply involved for decades, paramilitary death squads are invariably described in the media as a third force in the armed conflict, despite the fact that their victims are typically civilian opponents of the government, their members are drawn directly from serving members of the armed forces and they are only able to operate with the active complicity of the army (Human Rights Watch: The "Sixth Division"). In reality, they function as part of a shadow state, which exists to implement policies that must remain unaccountable.

More specifically, in the case of Iraq, this disinformation strategy not only seems to be designed to mask the real intellectual authors of genocidal crimes, but also, increasingly, appears to be

directed towards creating the very sectarian divisions that it hides behind.

Towards Balkanisation

In every country where US-backed counter insurgency operations have taken place with their attendant massacres and death squads, the conflict has existed as one dimension in a strategy of neo-colonisation. In Indonesia the communists were exterminated as part of the corporate takeover of the economy, setting the stage for the globalisation of Asia (Pilger, *op. cit.* p 15-44); in Colombia today, brutal death-squad massacres and the assassination of popular leaders exist to safeguard and extend the investments of foreign multinationals in oil and mining as well as as part of an ongoing process of privatisation.

In this respect, Iraq is no different. Over and above the desire to control Iraq's massive oil reserves, the country is being subjected to enforced neo-liberal shock therapy, with wages slashed and the extensive state sector rapidly offered up for sale. Corresponding with this, is a catastrophic level of unemployment and the abandonment of service provision for the majority of the population, in short a return to typical Third World conditions (The New Standard). Such a process of economic devastation is not only unpopular, it is intolerable and there can be no doubt that most people in Iraq will oppose cuts and sell-offs and demand a restoration of employment and services. This is not a sectarian issue. To the extent to which opposition becomes effective, the leaders and activists of the movement are likely to become military targets for the state death squads, whatever guise they take.

It is hard to know exactly who the victims of the present wave of assassinations are. Certainly they have included some trade union leaders (Iraqi Federation of Workers' Trade Unions), while in the period up to March 2004 more than 1000 leading professionals and intellectuals had already been killed and thousands more had fled the country (Al Jazeera). Many of these people would have been members of the Baath party and their murders are very likely to be part of the policy of de-Baathification, which, insofar as it exists, has not targeted CIA collaborators, but will undoubtedly have included those seen as potential opponents of the new state. In passing, it is worth noting that while thousands of former teachers have been sacked, thousands more are being recruited from outside Iraq (Al Mendhar), presumably because they are either cheaper to employ (denied by the Iraqi government) or because they are more malleable to the new educational regime, which works closely with the World Bank and provides lucrative contracts to the Washington-based Creative Associates Inc (Education News). Iraq's 30,000 new teachers have received just five days' training and must teach religion and a history that portrays Iraq's occupiers as saviours, rather than the former 'anti-Western propaganda' that might have served Iraqis better. Other victims of the death squads may be communists, the commentator Juan Cole noting that the Communist Party is so alarmed by the course of events that it is considering going underground; though he does not spell out the events that would force the party into hiding, they are not difficult to surmise (Juan Cole).

A further possibility, however, in addition to defeating a popularly backed resistance, is that the monstrous intelligence nexus created by the US in Iraq is orchestrating a strategy of ethnic cleansing as part of an effort to partition a country that might otherwise remain a regional pretender. Most of the military assaults have resulted in substantial civilian displacement (eg Washington Times), but, more worryingly, reports of families uprooting as the result of perceived sectarian violence are starting to become common. For example, in July, Mariam Fam of the Associated Press reported dozens of Shiites abandoned their homes in a poor farming community on the edge of Baghdad after receiving threats from Sunni militants that appeared in the form of typewritten flyers scattered on streets and doorsteps; prior to the Anglo-American invasion these people had shared their poverty, labour, food and intermarried with their Sunni neighbours (North Country Times). Similarly, Hala Jaber writing for the *Sunday Times* describes how Sunni families have fled Baghdad's majority-Shiite Iskan neighbourhood after the killings of 22 young Sunni men, taken away by men in police uniform who arrived in vehicles bearing police markings (Times Online). A similar situation is described in Baghdad's Ghalaliya district, where a spate of seemingly motiveless murders accelerated sharply over the summer, leaving more than 30 people, Sunnis and Shiites, dead (Los Angeles Times). The report claims that minority families there and

elsewhere are selling their homes and moving to areas where they are in the majority. A similar picture is starting to emerge from other parts of the country. Jaber notes that thousands of Shiites have fled the predominantly Sunni towns of Ramadi, Falluja and Latafiya, while, according to Juan Cole, Sunnis are leaving Iraq's deep south and Arabs, presumably of both denominations, are being forced from the Kurdish district of Kirkuk (Juan Cole).

While many in the mainstream media and Iraq's puppet government have argued that insurgents linked to Abu Musab Zarqawi and al-Qaida are behind much of the violence, deliberately hoping to inflame sectarian divisions and incite a civil war (eg. News Day), it is interesting to note how closely their dangerous schemes correspond with the avowed aims of one of the most powerful figures in present-day Iraq. Mowaffak Rubaie, the US-installed national security advisor, promotes a vision that he calls 'democratic regionalism', by which Iraq would be dismembered into a loose federal system of four to six distinct provinces, with at least two Shiite provinces to the south and Baghdad as a separate district as well as the seat of federal government, nominally responsible for national defence (Newsweek). Coincidentally, such a plan is well catered for by Iraq's new constitution (NPR), but would amount to the disintegration of the Iraqi state. A *de facto* civil war would undoubtedly advance this process.

The parallels with the break up of Yugoslavia are obvious. Ed Joseph of the highly establishment Woodrow Wilson International Centre for Scholars notes that 'the likelihood of civil war increases if, after attacks targeting a community, other members of the minority population flee', in turn persecuting minorities in the area to which they fled (Los Angeles Times, *op. cit.*). However, where he sees the situation in Iraq as comparable to Bosnia, in many ways the pattern is closer to that of Kosovo, where widespread ethnic cleansing against Serbs took places under the noses of NATO observers after the withdrawal of Yugoslav forces (World Socialist Website).

In view of mounting evidence of Anglo-American involvement in the bombing campaigns targeting Iraqi civilians, notably the brief arrest of two British SAS men found with a car packed with explosives (William Bowles), it is worth speculating a little on the implementation of their wider strategy. Discounting Al-Qaida and Zarqawi in Iraq as fabrications designed for easy media consumption (Centre for Research on Globalisation), we are left with a situation in which someone is targeting Shias, mainly through the planting of bombs around mosques and at religious ceremonies, and someone is targeting Sunnis, mainly through extrajudicial executions carried out by parties that look a lot like the police but have become linked with the Shiite Badr Brigade in the popular imagination. It is impossible that the Iraqi resistance could account for this pandemic of fratricidal violence, whatever Adnan Thabit might say about insurgents in police uniforms. It is equally impossible that SCIRI and the Badr Brigade could account for much of it in a milieu dominated by CIA assets and US military forces. What is possible is that both sides of the apparent sectarian violence are run as part of a huge CIA-lead intelligence operation designed to split Iraq at the seams. I tentatively suggest that the intelligence apparatus at the Interior Ministry is contriving attacks on Sunnis and that British and US special forces in conjunction with the intelligence apparatus at the Iraqi Defence Ministry are fabricating insurgent bombings of Shias. Overseeing the entire operation is the 'cream' of CMAD under the direction of top-level US intelligence asset Mowaffak Rubaie, a man already experienced at participating in bombing campaigns, undoubtedly working hand in glove with the CIA and the National Security Council in the US.

False Flags, Semiotics and Vulgar Marxists

The French theorist Jean Baudrillard famously once stated that the first Gulf War did not take place. By this he did not mean that nothing happened, but that its presentation in the media consisted of an overwhelming barrage of the *signs* of War, which bore essentially no relationship to the annihilation of a Third World army by the most advanced military power in history. In short it was a simulation of war. This was perhaps the most extreme example of what Baudrilliard referred to as the 'ecstacy of communication', that in our Information Age, concepts spin at such a rate that their outlines become lost and their original meanings are replaced with empty alternatives.

Fifteen years later, the same charges can be levelled against the recent Iraq 'War' and the country's subsequent occupation. Most importantly, I believe that a process akin to that Baudrillard highlighted is being actively employed to simulate a civil war in Iraq. False-flag intelligence operations are aimed at sowing seeds of a sectarian strife that was largely non-existent prior to the invasion. Thus, even many Sunni Iraqis are coming to believe that the well-organised death squads run from the CIA-controlled intelligence hub are actually the Badr Brigade they often claim to be; and thus British SAS men in Arab disguise plant bombs at Shia religious festivals to be blamed on fanatical Wahabi Sunni 'insurgents'.

Whether such tactics succeed in provoking further, autonomous acts of violence directed against the civilian population is much less significant than the impact they are able to exert within the media. This Anglo-American intelligence operation acts as a factory churning out the *signs* of Civil War: a 'wave of tit-for-tat sectarian violence' and the consequent ethnic cleansing. The signs are produced to be picked up by the media and spun and spun until nothing is left but a nebulous Civil War with no internal logic or structure, with the occupying forces as powerless to intervene as they were in the Balkans while Iraq splits into Rubiae's desired four to six autonomous provinces. Those few journalists, like Yasser Salihee and Steven Vincent, who break the mould and start to investigate the actual authorship of extrajudicial killings themselves become victims.

When one former CIA operative candidly claimed that 'Intelligence services are the heart and soul of a new country' (Washington Post)), they were inadvertently expressing a position that Noam Chomsky might call 'vulgar Marxist'. What they were actually confessing is that the essence of a state is the organisation of violence as the ultimate coercive measure and that the intelligence apparatus functions as its brain. Little wonder then that the US is so closely involved with intelligence services the world over, or that both *coup d'états* and savage repressions of sectors of the population deemed opposed to US interests have emanated from the offices of these same services.

To penetrate the media smokescreen of spontaneous, uncontrollable violence and understand the role of intelligence operations in the creation of a beholden, occupied client state or series of statelets is fundamental to understanding the processes in Iraq today. It is also fundamental to recognising that the presence of Anglo-American forces in Iraq does not merely exacerbate the present violence; in Iraq we are the violence.

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Our Monsters In Iraq

Robert Dreyfuss

November 18, 2005

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It is time to start waving the bloody shirt. There is no longer any doubt that the men that the United States has installed in power in Iraq are monsters. Not only that, but they are monsters armed, trained and supported by George W. Bush's administration. The very same Bush administration that defends torture of captives in the so-called War on Terrorism is using 150,000 U.S. troops to support a regime in Baghdad for which torture, assassination and other war crimes are routine.

So far, it appears that the facts are these: that Iraq's interior ministry, whose top officials, strike forces and police commando units (including the so-called Wolf Brigade) are controlled by paramilitary units from Shiite militias, maintained a medieval torture chamber; that inside that facility, hundreds of mostly Sunni Arab men were bestialized, with electric drills skewering their bones, with their skins flayed off, and more; that roving units of death-squad commandos are killing countless other Sunni Arab men in order to terrorize the Iraqi opposition. Even the *Washington Post*, that last-ditch defender of America's illegal and unprovoked assault on Iraq, says:

Scandal over the secret prison has forced the seven-month-old Shiite-led government to confront growing charges of mass illegal detentions, torture and killings of Sunni men. Members of the Sunni minority, locked in a struggle with the Shiite majority over the division of power in Iraq, say men dressed in Interior Ministry uniforms have repeatedly rounded up Sunni men from neighborhoods and towns. Bodies of scores of them have been found dumped by roadsides or in gullies.

The New York Times reports that the Iraqi interior minister isn't all that upset about the torture center. Bayan Jabr, "speaking of the prison in an angry sarcastic tone, said, 'There has been much exaggeration about this issue.' And he added, "Nobody was beheaded.'" So, apparently not beheading innocents is the standard of justice in the New Iraq. And, apparently there may be dozens, scores or hundreds of similar facilities.

This is not a surprise.

Nearly two years ago, writing in the *American Prospect*, I wrote the following: "The *Prospect* has learned that part of a secret $3 billion in new funds—tucked away in the $87 billion Iraq

appropriation that Congress approved in early November—will go toward the creation of a paramilitary unit manned by militiamen associated with former Iraqi exile groups...The bulk of the covert money will support U.S. efforts to create a lethal, and revenge-minded, Iraqi security force." Except for a parallel story by Sy Hersh in the *New Yorker*, the story was ignored.

Over the past two years, writing for *TomPaine.com*, I have repeatedly written about Shiite death squads and about abuses by the paramilitary Badr Brigade, the secret army trained and run by Iran's Revolutionary Guards. Iraqi Sunnis and opposition leaders, including Aiham Al Sammarae (as I wrote for *TomPaine*) have charged that the Iraqi government has been running assassination teams. Hundreds, perhaps thousands, have been killed already, including two attorneys for those accused in the kangaroo court set up to convict Saddam Hussein and other former Iraqi government officials. The *Post* suggests that the prison uncovered in Baghdad was a "secret torture center run with the help of intelligence agents from neighboring Iran." Read that again: intelligence agents from Iran.

Last week I had a chilling encounter with one of the monsters responsible for the Murder Inc. units run by Badr and by the Supreme Council for the Islamic Revolution in Iraq (SCIRI). At a Washington think tank, I met Adel Abdul Mahdi, Iraq's so-called deputy president and a SCIRI official. When I asked Mahdi about reports that Iraqi police and interior ministry squads were carrying out assassinations and other illegal acts, he didn't deny it—but, he said, such acts were merely a reaction to the terrorism of the resistance. "There is terrorism on only one side," he said. "Inappropriate acts by the other side, by the police—this is something else. This is a reaction." As far as civilian casualties in Sunni towns, he had this to say: "You can't fight terrorism without attacking some popular areas."

I also asked him about the Badr Brigade, the Iranian-backed paramilitary force that is the main domestic army propping up Abdul Mahdi's Shiite coalition, he said "they are disarmed," which is patently absurd. He added: "They participate fully in the political process."

Abdul Mahdi had this to say about Fallujah, the city that was obliterated by the U.S. armed forces a year ago. "It is one of the most peaceful areas in Iraq. I don't know whether the people are happy or not. But it is one of the most peaceful cities."

Make no mistake. The gangsters now running Iraq are our creatures.

Earlier this week, I was speaking with someone who was involved in the pre-2003 war planning effort vis-à-vis Iraq. As I mentioned in *TPM Cafe* , he told me that some of his colleagues realized that the New Iraq would probably be taken over not by Ahmed Chalabi, but by the Shiite fundamentalists. Those radical-right parties (along with the Kurds) were the real forces that took part in Chalabi's INC bloc. And the United States consciously supported the toppling of Saddam knowing that radical Shiites would be the chief beneficiaries. This was not an intelligence failure. We knew it. This was an explicit decision by the neocon-dominated cabal to replace Saddam with Shiite crazies. Now, we see that those crazies are running Saddam-like torture prisons where they use electric drills and flay the skin off Sunni captives.

The military in Iraq is scrambling to limit the damage from the stunning revelation about the men who are running Iraq today. We toppled Saddam—and in his place we've installed a hundred mini-Saddams.

The Salvadoran Option II

Whiskey bar



November 20, 2005

They really ought to send John Negroponte back to Iraq. It would be just like old home week:

Baghdad's Medical Forensic Institute - the mortuary - is a low, modern building reached via a narrow street. Most days it is filled with families of the dead. They come here for two reasons. One group, animated and noisy in grief, comes to collect its dead. The other, however, returns day after day to poke through the new cargoes of corpses ferried in by ambulance, looking for a face or clothes they might recognise. They are the relatives and friends of the 'disappeared', searching for their men. And when the disappeared are finally found, on the streets or in the city's massive rubbish dumps, or in the river, their bodies bear the all-too-telling signs of a savage beating, often with electrical cables, followed by the inevitable bullet to the head.

It's apparent -- both from this story and from reports by human rights groups (note the date on that one) -- that the U.S. and U.K. embassies have been aware for some time that Iraq's Ministry of the Interior has been turned into what the old National Guard used to be in El Salvador, or the Presidential Intelligence Unit in Guatemala, or the National Directorate of Investigation in Honduras, which is to say: death squad central.

And it's more than a bit noteworthy that something like this was predicted -- boasted about, really -- by anonymous Pentagon sources earlier this year:

The Pentagon is intensively debating an option that dates back to a still-secret strategy in the Reagan administration's battle against the leftist guerrilla insurgency in El Salvador in the early 1980s. Then, faced with a losing war against Salvadoran rebels, the U.S. government funded or supported "nationalist" forces that allegedly included so-called death squads directed to hunt down and kill rebel leaders and sympathizers. . . . One military source involved in the Pentagon debate . . . suggests that new offensive operations are needed that would create a fear of aiding the insurgency. "The Sunni population is paying no price for the support it is giving to the terrorists," he

said. "From their point of view, it is cost-free. We have to change that equation."

One of Sy Hersh's sources was a little more picturesque about it:

"Do you remember the right-wing execution squads in El Salvador?" the former high-level intelligence official asked me, referring to the military-led gangs that committed atrocities in the early nineteen-eighties. "We founded them and we financed them," he said. "The objective now is to recruit locals in any area we want. And we aren't going to tell Congress about it." A former military officer, who has knowledge of the Pentagon's commando capabilities, said, "We're going to be riding with the bad boys."

Indeed. Not that the "bad boys" of SCIRI and the Badr Organization particularly needed any encouragement from Uncle Sam.

But now that the Salvadoran Option is up and running -- very smoothly, by all accounts -- one can wonder why the Americans suddenly changed their mind, and busted down the doors of one of SCIRI's secret prisons the other day.

Did things get out of hand, ala Abu Ghraib? (Ala the entire war, for that matter.) Or was the Death Squad Program-Related Activities Bureau ordered to switch gears, once the Finding a Political Solution to the Insurgency Department finally realized that sending Shi'a death squads out to torture and kill Sunni politicians, their bodyguards and their supporters was a bit counterproductive? These kind of bureacratic snafus happen.

Personally, I think it probably just dawned on the architects of the Salvadoran Option that while they *thought* they were riding with the bad boys, the *real* bad boys were out riding with the Iranian secret police, who don't need any Spanish lessons on how to run a dirty war.

And so now we have Iranian-backed Shi'a death squads hunting their political enemies through the slums of Baghdad under the pretext of fighting the insurgency, while Sunni Baathists (and/or their jihadist allies) blow up Shi'a mosques at prayer time under the pretext of fighting the American occupation.

Meanwhile, back here in the good old U.S. of A (the A is for assholes) the ruling party is reliving Joe McCarthy's glory years, while the leaders of the so-called opposition party try to hide their worthless carcasses behind an ex-Marine congressman who finally saw one too many broken bodies warehoused at Walter Reed and suffered a temporary fit of sanity, causing him to blurt out the ugly truth that the war is hopelessly lost. For which crime he will now be the subject of an ethics investigation by the same people who made Jack Abramoff an honorary member of the House Republican Caucus.

Truly, to quote Leonard -- the psychotic recruit in *Full Metal Jacket* -- we are in a world of shit.

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Torture and Extrajudicial Killings in Iraq

by Max Fuller

November 24, 2005

GlobalResearch.ca

For the last week the US government has been reeling both from the revelation that it employed white phosphorous in Fallujah and from the discovery that the government it helped install is running secret detention centres in which prisoners are subjected to serious abuse.

The detention facility in the Jadiriyah district of Baghdad was discovered on Sunday 13 November when US soldiers entered an Interior Ministry building in their hunt for a missing 15-year-old. What they discovered was a chamber of horrors. More than 170 prisoners were packed into a foetid underground bunker. They were half-starved and many of them had been seriously beaten. Torture instruments were found hidden above a false ceiling and reports stated that some prisoners had been flayed.

Predictably, the US embassy issued a statement denouncing the treatment and insisting that torture was unacceptable, while Iraqi prime minister Ibrahim Jafaari insisted there would be an enquiry and Hussein Kamal, deputy head of the Interior Ministry, downplayed the incident. Such denials failed to convince the intrepid western media, which cannily pointed to Shia domination of the government, especially the Interior Ministry. A number of reports also cited rumours that the facility had been used by the Badr Brigade, the former armed wing of The Supreme Council for Islamic Revolution in Iraq. For the majority of western journalists, the incident is yet another example of what they claim is a wave of sectarian violence sweeping Iraq.

What the western media has so far failed to disclose is that a strikingly similar incident occurred just a day after the nominal handover of power to Ayad Allawi's Interim Government. On 29 June 2004, military police from the Oregon National Guard stormed the compound of the Interior Ministry itself to rescue dozens of detainees whom they had observed being tortured. As at Jadiriyah, the victims had been deprived of food and savagely beaten. Dozens more detainees were discovered in sheds, alongside instruments of torture. Some of the detainees were in a life-threatening condition and the guardsmen began to administer emergency medical care.

Most shockingly, when the guardsmen radioed for support, senior US officers ordered them to stand down. After hours of tense negotiations, the guardsmen reluctantly withdrew, leaving the prisoners with their abusers.

The incident demonstrates two extremely important points. Firstly, the latest discovery is not news for US authorities, who have been aware of serious abuse taking place inside Interior Ministry facilities for more than a year and taken no action to prevent it. Secondly, such abuse cannot simply be ascribed to sectarian Shia control of the Interior Ministry. In fact, many of the most senior posts at the Ministry continue to be filled by ex-Baathists, including some of those most associated with suppression of the Shia rising that followed the first Gulf War.

The practice of torture at Interior Ministry facilities is in many ways the tip of the iceberg.

For the last year hundreds of bodies - the apparent victims of extrajudicial executions - have been turning up across Iraq, especially Baghdad. Typically, the victims are bound and blindfolded and have been dispatched with shots to the head and chest. Many of them also bear the marks of brutal torture.

The only serious investigation to have been carried out within Iraq was by an Iraqi journalist, Yasser Salihee. He pointed to the hundreds of execution victims making their way through the Baghdad morgue and highlighted the fact that in many cases those victims are known to have been arrested by gunmen in police uniforms, sporting expensive police equipment, including vehicles, weapons and sophisticated radios. His final article was published on 27 June, three days after his own assassination at the hands of a US sniper, but his allegations echo those of Sunni groups, who have accused the government of state terrorism.

The majority of specific accusations have focused on a unit called the Wolf Brigade, attached to the Interior Ministry's Special Police Commandos. This unit, formed in autumn last year, saw its first major action in Mosul in November 2004 in what seems to have been a serious clash with resistance fighters. Dozens of bodies began to appear on the streets as the commandos conducted sweeps of the city.

More recently, in July, the Wolf Brigade is known to have been responsible for an incident in which 11 bricklayers were seized at a Baghdad hospital and locked in the back of a police vehicle in searing heat for 16 hours. Ten of the men died and doctors carrying out a post mortem concluded that the victims had also been subjected to torture, including by electrocution.

Whilst death-squad-style killings are now generally acknowledged, the perpetrators are almost always claimed to belong to Shiite militias, perhaps under the control of a Shiite-dominated Interior Ministry. Even the Wolf Brigade is linked with sectarian violence, but the reality is that the Special Police Commandos are composed of ex special-forces and Republican Guard personnel and were established by former Baathists with long histories of involvement with the CIA, under the supervision of US counterinsurgency experts. One advisor was the same James Steele who previously commanded the US military mission in El Salvador at the height of that country's unspeakably dirty civil war. There, Steele was responsible for creating the 'elite' squads that accounted for the bulk of the army's largely civilian casualties.

Another was Steven Casteel, the most senior US advisor within the Interior Ministry and the man who successfully negotiated the withdrawal of the Oregon National Guardsmen. Some of his experience was gained in Colombia, where he was involved in the Centra Spike operations, a data-collection exercise in which lists of the associates of cocaine baron Pablo Escobar were murdered by the Los Pepes death squads. Los Pepes went on to form the nucleus for the present murderous AUC.

The US, largely through the CIA, has a long history of involvement with genocidal intelligence operations, from Indonesia under Suharto, through Operation Phoenix in Vietnam, to present-day Colombia. The current mass arrests in Iraq and subsequent killings bear all the hallmarks of such an operation. By analogy, one can reasonably guess that the current flood of victims will include anyone opposing US hegemony, such as the hundreds of teachers and academics who have already been assassinated, as well as the human 'waste' generated through 'heavy interrogation'. A further possibility is that ordinary Sunni Iraqis are deliberately being victimised as part of a strategy of fomenting sectarian strife designed to engineer the Balkanisation of Iraq. With that in mind, it is time to start asking hard questions about the role of the two British SAS men caught with a car load of

explosives and accused by Iraqis of planning to attack a Shia religious festival.

According to The Guardian, one former Interior Ministry detainee claimed prisoners prayed to be transferred to Abu Ghraib. This is no commendation of US treatment of prisoners, but only highlights the fact that many of the worst crimes are reserved, as they have been in Latin America, for US proxies. In El Salvador Noam Chomsky noted that it was not enough for US-backed paramilitaries to kill someone; instead they might be decapitated and their head placed on a spike. In Iraq similar distinctions exist. The victims of US-trained death squads are not just humiliated; their eyes are gouged out, their skin is peeled off and electric drills are driven through their knees.

For more information about the role of death squads in Iraq and media disinformation relating to it, see the following articles by Max Fuller

http://globalresearch.ca/articles/FUL506A.html

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http://www.globalresearch.ca/index.php?context=viewArticle&code=FUL20051110&articleId=1230

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Uncovering the Roots of American Terrorism in Iraq

Mike Whitney



December 2, 2005

Max Fuller has written the most important article of the year and perhaps the decade. In his "Crying Wolf: Media Disinformation and Death Squads in Occupied Iraq", Fuller painstakingly lays out the details and documentation to prove that the United States intelligence agencies are behind the vast incidents of murder and torture being carried out in Iraq today. If Fuller's thesis is correct, then the War on Terror, that mighty engine of imperial carnage, is nothing more than a public relations scam to enlist public support.

The war on terror is the "seminal lie" from which all the administration's criminal excesses are mere tributaries. America's unprovoked aggression in Iraq, as well as the appalling assault on civil liberties, has been carried out in the name of the war on terror. In fact, it has been used as to mask everything from police-state legislation at home to massive human rights violations abroad. The war on terror is an all-inclusive fraud that is the greatest threat to personal freedom and global security the world has ever seen. If unchallenged, we can expect the dictatorial-powers of the president to increase and the world plunged into another century of war.

Fuller's article sweeps away the illusions created by the war on terror. With laser-like intensity he focuses a steady beam of light on the most expansive clandestine intel-operation of all time; the terrorizing of an entire nation, pushing it inexorably towards civil war. The Interior Ministry is at the epicenter of Iraq's violent malaise. It is the headquarters for the Badr and Wolf Brigades; the American-trained death squads which are responsible for the massive assassination program directed at "alleged" Sunni resistance fighters. The torture chambers, death squads, and random bombings are not caused by foreign terrorists, nor are they the work of Iranian agents striving for a theocratic regime in Baghdad. They are, in fact, the nefarious activities of American puppet-masters, who matriculated in the terror wars in Nicaragua and El Salvador. Now, under Uncle Sam's benign gaze, they are plying their trade in Iraq; wreaking havoc and spreading suffering on an unimaginable scale.

What does this mean?

It means that the "central front in the war on terror" is a phantom; a specter; a chimera that cloaks itself in the dull braying of plutocrats who promise democracy, but only deliver greater deprivation, sorrow and fear. It means that the ideological headwaters of global terrorism is Washington and that behind the scratchy façade of Al Qaida videos and dubious accounts of suicide bombers, the insidious fist of the imperial master continues to pound away at its victims. It means that, as Martin Luther King said, "The greatest purveyor of violence in the world today is my own country."

The media has played a central role in trying to obfuscate the details of America's involvement in the terror-war by characterizing the hundreds of murder victims as the result of tit-for-tat sectarian violence or of rogue Shiite militias loosely connected to the Interior Ministry. But, as Fuller deftly demonstrates, the more likely explanation is that the Ministry is executing a clear strategy of gratuitous terror devised and directed by their American handlers.

The immense media disinformation campaign is designed to shift blame away from its American roots and promote the idea of massive sectarian unrest. This feeds the notion of an incipient civil war, which in turn achieves the American policy objective of Balkanizing the country to control its resources.

The one reporter who diverged from these fabrications was Yasser Salihee, reporter for Knight-Ridder news. Salihee had uncovered critical information about the weaponry, vehicles and origins of the death squads, and was expected to file reports on those topics. His coverage, however, was cut short when he was assassinated in a gangland style hit at a checkpoint outside Baghdad by an American sniper. With just one precision shot to the forehead, another unembedded journalist was removed from covering Bush's folly.

Fuller's research exposes the Interior Ministry as the hub of the clandestine death squad activity. The assumption that the ministry is manned exclusively by theocratic Shiites is just more misleading media gibberish. In fact, one of the more brutal counterinsurgency groups, the Sunni-led Special Police Commandos, is headed by a former officer in Saddam's Baath Party. (The Commandos were founded by the son of the former Iraqi Chief of Staff Falah al-Naqib, who many believed to be a CIA asset.) The connections of Interior Ministry chieftains to their CIA managers are deep and confusing but, as Fuller notes, "the Police Commandos were formed under the experienced tutelage and oversight of veteran US counterinsurgency fighters, and from the outset conducted joint-force operations with elite and highly secretive US special-forces units." (Reuters, National Review Online)

Fuller says: "A key figure in the development of the Special Police Commandos was James Steele, a former US Army special forces operative who cut his teeth in Vietnam before moving on to direct the US military mission in El Salvador at the height of that country's civil war…. Another US contributor was the same Steven Casteel who as the most senior US advisor within the Interior Ministry brushed off serious and well-substantiated accusations of appalling human right violations as 'rumor and innuendo'….Casteel's background is significant because this kind of intelligence-gathering support role and the production of death lists are characteristic of US involvement in counterinsurgency programs and constitute the underlying thread in what can appear to be random, disjointed killing sprees."

Needless, to say, the CIA does not move major assets like Steele and Casteel into a prickly situation like Iraq to shuffle papers by a water-cooler. These are the main gears in the machinery of the Iraqi death squads; the movable parts in Washington's apparatus of state terror. There is nothing either "random" or "disjointed" in the butchery produced by their labors.

Fuller adds: "The Police Commando headquarters has become the hub of a nationwide command, control, communications, computer and intelligence operations centre, courtesy of the US (Defend America)."

The administration has provided a "state of the art" communications network to "coordinate mass murder".

"DeBaathification" is a sham. Many of the top-ranking officials in the Ministry are Sunnis, including "deputy Minister for Intelligence Affairs (also leader of the Interior Ministry's spy service) currently held by General Hussain Kamel".

So, too, the notion of rogue Iranian-supported militias carrying out random attacks on "alleged" Sunnis suspects is equally deceptive.

Nearly everything that appears in the corporate media has been intentionally misleading as part of the broader information war, to keep the American people from grasping the truth about the chief perpetrator of terrorism in Iraq today; the US intelligence agencies. As the Los Angeles Times notes, "The entire intelligence establishment is a creation of the Anglo-American secret services, which began building at least as early as the beginning of the occupation."

You've been fooled; I've been fooled; and everything the Pentagon has said has been a lie. The fetid entrails of this terror-beast reside in Washington, not Baghdad or Tehran.

The recent revelations (carefully excluded from the American press) of two British commandos dressed in traditional Arab garb caught in Basra with a trunk-load full of explosives (William Bowles) has even cast doubt on the involvement of the intelligence agencies in the rash of terror bombings plaguing the country. Certainly, the ensuing anger generated from these attacks is more compatible with the administration's goals of sectarian division than they are with the nebulous theories about the apocryphal al-Zarqawi.

Fuller says:

"What is possible is that both sides of the apparent sectarian violence are run as part of a huge CIA-lead intelligence operation designed to split Iraq at the seams. I tentatively suggest that the intelligence apparatus at the Interior Ministry is contriving attacks on Sunnis and that British and US Special Forces in conjunction with the intelligence apparatus at the Iraqi Defense Ministry are fabricating insurgent bombings of Shias. Overseeing the entire operation is the 'cream' of CMAD under the direction of top-level US intelligence asset Mowaffak Rubaie, a man already experienced at participating in bombing campaigns, undoubtedly working hand in glove with the CIA and the National Security Council in the US."

"a huge CIA-lead intelligence operation designed to split Iraq at the seams".

Amen.

Given Fuller's thesis, it's likely that most of the alleged "suicide" bombings are nothing more than stationary vehicles set off by remote-control and reported as suicide attacks by the compliant media to perpetuate the racial stereotypes of crazed Muslim fanatics.

Fuller's article is a difficult read with hefty documentation that tends to have a mind-numbing effect. Never the less, the ponderous emphasis on facts and actual news reports serve his greater purpose of proving a very tenuous and thorny theory, that the US is overseeing a humongous clandestine operation that has fractured the country and destabilized the region. As Fuller says, "(The) presence of Anglo-American forces in Iraq does not merely exacerbate the present violence; in Iraq we are the violence."

The fictional War on Terror

The war on terror is a fabrication so large and all-encompassing that it includes both political parties, the Pentagon, the main-body of corporate and financial elites, and virtually the entire western media. It is the underlying myth that animates the American war-machine and breathes life into the coercive apparatus of state terror. Fuller's article uncovers a fissure in the block-wall of government secrecy and gives us a good look at the worm-infested core of imperial rule. Global terrorism flows from Washington like a toxic river that has breached its banks and threatens to flood everything in its path.

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Features

Who is controlling the death squads in Iraq?

It has become impossible for anyone with half an eye on Iraq over the last six months not to recognise the widespread presence of death squads, especially in Baghdad and the ring of towns surrounding it.

Typically, the victims of the death squads are found casually discarded — their eyes may be blindfolded, their hands are bound or handcuffed behind the back and they have been killed with shots to the head or chest.

The victims frequently bear the signs of horrific torture, including savage beatings, electrocution, cigarette and acid burns, gouged out eyes and even the use of electric drills.

In every case where evidence is available, the victims were arrested by uniformed members of the police or armed forces, or un-uniformed gunmen bearing interior ministry identification.

Such killings are not mere blips on the screen, but are considered to have reached epidemic proportions by human rights groups in Baghdad, who regard them and the associated disappearances as the most pressing problem in Iraq today.

One Baghdad mosque has documented the death or disappearance of around 700 Sunni Muslim civilians during the last four months.

In July the Iraqi journalist Yasser Salihee described hundreds of victims of extrajudicial killings passing through the Baghdad morgue.

Although his picture of the morgue is confirmed by other journalists, he remains the only one to have seriously investigated the allegations of involvement by the security forces.

His last article was published on 27 June, three days after his own assassination at the hands of a US army sniper at a routine checkpoint.

The most prominent allegations have come from Sunni groups, as the majority of victims seem to have been young Sunni men.

In May, the Association of Muslim Scholars accused the government of conducting a policy of state terror.

It pointed to what it believed to be the presence of members of the Badr Brigade, the armed wing of the Supreme Council for Islamic Revolution in Iraq, operating alongside interior ministry commandos.

The Iraqi government has responded by alleging that extrajudicial killings are the work of insurgents masquerading as police officers.

This leaves gaping questions hanging over how “insurgents” were able to obtain uniforms and expensive police equipment, as well as how they are able to operate freely in heavily curfewed areas.

The mainstream Western media, however, is not so easily outfoxed. They have seized on the allegations of Badr involvement and repeated the charge of sectarianism like a mantra. The pattern is consistent.

After every fresh revelation of torture or murder linked to Iraq’s new interior ministry, the media trots out much the same story.

It refers to uncontrollable militias, Badr infiltration of the security forces and Shia domination of the interior ministry.

It inevitably concludes that the incident in question is yet another example of the sectarian violence gripping Iraq.

Unspeakable

The pattern is visible in the most recent flurry of journalistic concern following the discovery on 13 November of an underground torture chamber in Baghdad, where around 170 prisoners were kept in unspeakable conditions.

Rumours that some of them had already been tortured to death remain unconfirmed.

The Observer’s Peter Beaumont writes that the roots of the human rights catastrophe that has enveloped the ministry are to be found in the simmering sectarian conflict of tit-for-tat assassinations.

The Independent’s Kim Sengupta states that the Badr militia controls part of the ministry.

No evidence is offered to support the contention that Badr controls the interior ministry, except perhaps the mention that the present minister is himself a former Badr member.

Almost no mention is made of the US and Britain's role in training the security forces beside the occasional "obviously knew nothing about it" comment.

No frame of reference of other US-backed counter insurgency campaigns is ever offered.

What the mainstream Western media neglects to remind us is that following the occupation of Iraq, British and US intelligence went into overdrive to establish a new Iraqi intelligence apparatus.

They rightly saw this as the linchpin of their puppet state. Recruits were drawn from existing intelligence agents (presumably CIA assets) within the main political parties, all of whom had returned to Iraq on the back of US tanks, and hammered into a new organisation known as the Collection, Management and Analysis Directorate (CMAD).

CMAD's first task was to draw up lists of opponents, who were to be the targets of a paramilitary unit drawn from the militias of the same political parties, working in collusion with US special forces.

Who these targets were is not known. It is known, however, that in the first year of occupation some 1,000 Iraqi professionals, including many teachers, were murdered, promoting a mass exodus.

While some reporters suggested that disgruntled students might be responsible for the massacre of academics, the pattern is better placed within the total levelling of Iraq's cultural and political life — an apocalyptic Year Zero.

This has, as journalist Felicity Arbuthnot describes in her article, Iraq's Year Zero, (**www.globalresearch.ca/articles/arb504a.html**), witnessed the destruction of written records, historical treasures, public monuments and, it seems, even people.

US experienced in fighting dirty wars

Far from being Shia fundamentalists, Iraq's new spy chiefs were former Baathists and long-term CIA assets like general Mohammad Shahwani, who became the director of the National Intelligence Service when CMAD was split in June 2004.

The US has been busy rebuilding the Iraqi interior ministry. The ministry was headed, until the notional transfer of power, by US Drug Enforcement Agency man Steven Casteel.

Casteel's experience was gained in Latin America, where he was involved in several of the drug wars that served as cover for the CIA in the 1980s and 1990s.

He was involved in the hunt for Colombia's cocaine baron Pablo Escobar.

This was an enormous covert intelligence operation that saw the creation of the Los Pepes death squad, which was to serve as the backbone for the country's present paramilitary organisation.

Alongside Casteel, came James Steele, who, as senior counsellor to US ambassador Paul Bremer for Iraqi security forces, was to systematise the establishment of paramilitary special forces units within the new interior ministry.

Steele's background runs from Vietnam and Cambodia to El Salvador and Panama. Steele was there to train the police and army just about anywhere murderous repression took place.

In Iraq, Steele was responsible for overseeing the establishment of the Special Police Commandos, including the notorious Wolf Brigade.

The Police Commandos are the most widely implicated of all the new formations in Iraq, but they are not commanded by religious fanatics.

Their leaders are drawn from former military personnel, including general Rashid Flayyih, who, though a Shia, is the man most closely associated with the suppression of the Shia rising following the first Gulf War, as well as being a CIA collaborator.

Neither the transfer of sovereignty to the interim government, nor the switching of regimes to the transitional one, made any impact on the careers of the carefully groomed assets within the new Iraqi state, quashing the media-cherished notion of de-Baathification.

The picture of mass murder and torture at the hands of US proxies emerging from Iraq is consistent with the experience of every other counter-insurgency war in which the US has been involved.

From Indonesia to El Salvador, hundreds of thousands of killings have been committed by US-backed and trained forces.

This is all to ensure continuing access to markets, cheap labour and raw materials, and to prevent the rise of economic and social alternatives that could deliver hope to the masses.

This multi-tiered operation means operatives like Steele select the most brutal accomplices they can find, while top-level planners direct dirty wars from lavish offices. Both sets are murderers.

But between them, and between the crimes and the public who would put an end to them, are the professional liars of the corporate media, who, in concealing the truth, are as complicit as the driller killers in the balaclavas.

For more from Max Fuller go to the Centre for Research on Globalisation website ***www.globalresearch.ca***
» For Iraq, the Salvador Option becomes reality
» ***Crying Wolf: media disinformation and death squads in occupied Iraq***

Iraq's death squads: On the brink of civil war

Andrew Buncombe and Patrick Cockburn



Most of the corpses in Baghdad's mortuary show signs of torture and execution. And the Interior Ministry is being blamed.

26 February 2006

Hundreds of Iraqis are being tortured to death or summarily executed every month in Baghdad alone by death squads working from the Ministry of the Interior, the United Nations' outgoing human rights chief in Iraq has revealed.

John Pace, who left Baghdad two weeks ago, told The Independent on Sunday that up to three-quarters of the corpses stacked in the city's mortuary show evidence of gunshot wounds to the head or injuries caused by drill-bits or burning cigarettes. Much of the killing, he said, was carried out by Shia Muslim groups under the control of the Ministry of the Interior.

Much of the statistical information provided to Mr Pace and his team comes from the Baghdad Medico-Legal Institute, which is located next to the city's mortuary. He said figures show that last July the morgue alone received 1,100 bodies, about 900 of which bore evidence of torture or summary execution. The pattern prevailed throughout the year until December, when the number dropped to 780 bodies, about 400 of which had gunshot or torture wounds.

"It's being done by anyone who wishes to wipe out anybody else for various reasons," said Mr Pace, who worked for the UN for more than 40 years in countries ranging from Liberia to Chile. "But the bulk are attributed to the agents of the Ministry of the Interior."

Coupled with the suicide bombings and attacks on Shia holy places carried out by Sunnis, some of whom are followers of Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, al-Qa'ida's leader in Iraq, the activities of the death squads are pushing Iraq ever closer to a sectarian civil war.

Mr Pace said the Ministry of the Interior was "acting as a rogue element within the government". It is controlled by the main Shia party, the Supreme Council for Islamic Revolution in Iraq (Sciri); the Interior Minister, Bayan Jabr, is a former leader of Sciri's Badr Brigade militia, which is one of the main groups accused of carrying out sectarian killings. Another is the Mehdi Army of the young cleric Moqtada al-Sadr, who is part of the Shia coalition seeking to form a government after winning the mid-December election.

Many of the 110,000 policemen and police commandos under the ministry's control are suspected of being former members of the Badr Brigade. Not only counter-insurgency units such as the Wolf Brigade, the Scorpions and the Tigers, but the commandos and even the highway patrol police have been accused of acting as death squads.

The paramilitary commandos, dressed in garish camouflage uniforms and driving around in pick-up trucks, are dreaded in Sunni neighbourhoods. People whom they have openly arrested have frequently been found dead several days later, with their bodies bearing obvious marks of torture.

Mr Pace, a Maltese-Australian who has now retired from his UN post to his home in Sydney, says the constant violence and utter lack of security in Iraq are creating a vicious circle in which ordinary citizens are turning to extremist sectarian groups for protection. Fear of anybody in official uniform inevitably strengthens the militias and the insurgents. In Sunni areas people will look to their own defences, and not to the regular army and police.

But ordinary Sunnis are caught between the death squads and the desire of some of the insurgents on their own side to start a civil war - an aim they are now not far from achieving. The so-called Salafi, Sunni fundamentalists, want not only to eject the Americans but also to build a pure Islamic state. They see Iraqi Shias, even though they are 60 per cent of the population, as heretics allied to the US who should be slaughtered.

Last week's attack on the Golden Mosque is only the latest in a long series of outrages against the Shia community. They started in August 2003 when Mohammed Baqr al-Hakim, then leader of Sciri, was killed, along with more than 100 of his followers by a suicide bomber in a vehicle outside the Imam Ali shrine in Najaf. There have been repeated massacres of the Shia ever since - some targeting the security forces, such as the attacks on queues of young men trying to join the police or army, but others, such as the slaughter of Shia day labourers waiting for a day's employment, for no other reason than that they are Shia.

Despite extending a 24-hour curfew into a second day yesterday in Baghdad and other major cities, the authorities were unable to prevent further revenge killings and outrages against holy sites. The current cycle of violence, which began with the bombing of the Azkariya shrine in Samarra on Wednesday, has claimed at least 200 lives so far, including those of 47 factory workers pulled from buses and shot on the outskirts of Baghdad.

This was the sort of killing that touched off Lebanon's civil war in 1975. Already an exchange of populations is taking place in Baghdad as members of each community move to districts in which they are in the majority.

The ability of the US occupiers to influence the situation is not only limited, but some of their actions are seen as making things worse. The Americans have been trying to dislodge Mr Jabr as Interior Minister, accusing him of turning his ministry into a Shia bastion. But the Shia believe that the US and its allies, the Kurds, simply want to prevent the majority community from gaining full power over security despite winning two parliamentary elections in 2005.

One important development over the past few days is that it is clearly becoming very difficult to use American or British troops to keep the peace, undermining the argument that they are the only bulwark against civil war. The occupation forces lack the legitimacy to play the role of UN peacekeepers; it is almost impossible to have US soldiers defend a Sunni mosque against a Shia crowd, because if they open fire they will be seen as having joined one side in a sectarian struggle.

In Mr Pace's view, the violence in Iraq is being made worse by the seizing of young Iraqi men by US troops and Iraqi police as they move from city to city carrying out raids. "The vast majority are innocent," he said, "but they very often don't get released for months. You don't eliminate terrorism by what they're doing now. Military intervention causes serious human rights and humanitarian problems to large numbers of innocent civilians ... The result is that such individuals turn into terrorists at the end of their detention."

In such circumstances, family members often contacted UN officials asking for help in getting a young man outside of the country and away from the influence of insurgents they had met in jail. They were among many Iraqi citizens fleeing the country as a result of the violence. "Those with money go

to Jordan. The poor go to Syria," he said.

Mr Pace, who first made his comments to The Times of Malta newspaper, said the situation in Iraq had "definitely, definitely" got worse over the two years in which he headed the UN human rights team. The interim government and the international community were trying to restart the country's crippled economy, but, he said, they would not succeed "until people are secure".

THE KILLERS

BADR BRIGADE:

Armed wing of the most powerful Shia party. Many police and paramilitaries 'still wear Badr T-shirts under their uniform,' a US general said.

MEHDI ARMY:

Loyal to the Shia cleric Moqtada al-Sadr. Apart from open clashes with Sunnis, its members in the police are accused of death squad killings.

DEFENDERS OF KHADAMIYA:

Followers of Hussein al-Sadr, Moqtada relative. Among forces set up to guard Shia shrines, but having more sinister links.

SPECIAL POLICE

COMMANDOS:

Feared by Sunnis, despite having had some Sunni commanders.

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Iraq: The Death-Squad War

Seeking justice among corrupt cops, crooks and torturers.

Michael Hastings, Newsweek



Feb. 27, 2006 issue - They sat dejectedly on the floor in ill-fitting police uniforms, separated from the other inmates at Baghdad's Al Hakimiya detention facility. The 18 prisoners in blue were members of the highway patrol. Government investigators allege that the prisoners were also part of a roaming death squad and that they had been preparing to kill a Sunni prisoner when they were arrested at a checkpoint in Baghdad in late January. When NEWSWEEK encountered the detained cops during a visit to Al Hakimiya shortly after their arrest, one of them rose to his feet, gave his name as Maan Hadi and denied they had done anything wrong. He said he and his friends had captured a suspect who was wanted by U.S. authorities, but the Iraqi troops running the checkpoint decided to steal credit for the arrest. "They wanted our prisoner, and when we refused to give him up right away, they arrested us," Hadi said. "They beat the crap out of us."

U.S. and Iraqi officials are calling the group's arrest a breakthrough. "We have found one of the death squads," Maj. Gen. Joseph Peterson told the Chicago Tribune last week. "They are a part of the police force of Iraq." No one knows how many death squads are currently operating in Iraq, but in the past year hundreds of murdered bodies have been found, many of them with their wrists bound execution style and a single bullet through the head. Some death squads are killing Shiites; others are executing Sunnis. In many cases, witnesses tell of victims being abducted by unidentified men in police uniforms. Almost unnoticed amid the country's chaos, the dirty war is beginning to rival the insurgency in its deadliness and in its damage to national stability. "This is very dangerous," says Deputy Prime Minister Rowsch Shaways. "If it keeps up like this, it will lead us to civil war."

The patrolmen seemingly made no effort to disguise what they were doing when their five-car convoy pulled up at the checkpoint in northern Baghdad. They freely declared that they were taking their Sunni prisoner to a place where they could kill him, the Tribune reported. There were 22 officers in the group altogether. The four apparent ringleaders were taken into U.S. custody at Abu Ghraib, and the other 18 were sent to Al Hakimiya. Their prisoner was reportedly thrown in jail, too—on murder charges. The day after the general's interview hit the papers, Iraq's Ministry of Interior (MOI) hurriedly broke its long silence on the death squads, promising to launch a formal investigation. "Sunnis and Shiites are killing each other," the MOI official directing the inquiry, Hussein Ali Kamal, told NEWSWEEK. "Sunnis are attacking Shiite mosques. Shiites are attacking Sunni mosques. Both have death squads."

Can Iraqis trust the Ministry of Interior to put a stop to it? Interior is one of Iraq's most dishonest ministries, according to Judge Rahdi Hamza al-Rahdi, director of the government's top anti-corruption agency, the Commission on Public Integrity. Roughly 400 MOI officials are currently under the commission's scrutiny.

The fears are underscored by the way the MOI runs its detention facilities. Bribery is said to be so rampant that a standard list of under-the-table fees has apparently evolved. Mohammed Abid, a defense lawyer in Baghdad, says clients describe prices that range from 30,000 Iraqi dinar (about $21) for one minute on a mobile phone to $40,000 in U.S. currency for release from custody. Those rates are independently confirmed by an Iraqi police officer who has spent two years working at Al Hakimiya and does not wish to be named, out of fear and shame. "I'm coming forward for reasons that are

between me and Allah," he says. "I have done things. I needed to tell someone." He says torture and beatings are part of the daily routine, creating an eager market for guards who sell painkillers to the inmates.

Iraq's officer in charge at Al Hakimiya, Brig. Gen. Tha-mer Sadoon, denies that any serious abuses have taken place there since his arrival in September. The Ministry of Interior refused to talk to NEWSWEEK about conditions at other MOI-run facilities. Some of those detention centers may not even be known. "I can surely say there are secret prisons," says Aida Sharif, a deputy minister at Iraq's Ministry of Human Rights. And God only knows what goes on there.

With Babak Dehghanpisheh in Baghdad
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Police Tied to Death Squads

Solomon Moore, LATimes Staff Writer

U.S. military officials say they suspect Iraq's highway patrol, staffed largely by Shiites, is deeply involved in torture and killings.

BAGHDAD — A 1,500-member Iraqi police force with close ties to Shiite militia groups has emerged as a focus of investigations into suspected death squads working within the country's Interior Ministry.

Iraq's national highway patrol was established largely to stave off insurgent attacks on roadways. But U.S. military officials, interviewed over the last several days, say they suspect the patrol of being deeply involved in illegal detentions, torture and extrajudicial killings.

The officials said that in recent months the U.S. has withdrawn financial and advisory support from the patrol in an effort to distance the American training effort from what they perceived to be a renegade force.

"We don't train them, we don't give them equipment, we don't conduct site visits over there. They are just bad, criminal people," said a high-ranking U.S. military officer who advises the Interior Ministry. The officer was one of three who each spoke on condition of anonymity, saying they wanted to maintain relationships with Iraqi police officials and avoid retaliation by U.S. military superiors.

Last month, Iraqi army soldiers stopped a 22-member squad of uniformed highway patrol officers at a nighttime checkpoint in northern Baghdad and discovered a man in their custody who told them the police planned to kill him. His contention was supported by confessions of officers in the squad, U.S. advisors said.

U.S. officials have called 2006 "the year of the police" and have placed a

renewed emphasis on training officers. The Bush administration repeatedly has said the development of Iraq's security forces must occur before withdrawal of U.S. troops can begin.

The U.S. military works closely with Iraqi army units, conducting joint operations and sharing space on some military bases. By contrast, police forces have evolved far more independently in approximately 11,000 stations and outposts around the nation.

The result is a motley conglomeration of agencies under the Interior Ministry with overlapping jurisdictions and poorly defined functions.

"You've got the facilities protection service, the public order brigades, the commandos, the highway patrol, the regular police, the traffic police, patrol officers," said a second U.S. military official.

"Who knows who they all are? Nobody controls them but the minister," the officer said, referring to Interior Minister Bayan Jabr.

Jabr, a Shiite with close ties to the Badr Brigade, a paramilitary group, has been at the center of allegations of abuse at the hands of Iraqi security forces. The minister's notoriety rose last year as the bodies of hundreds of men — mostly Sunni Arabs — started appearing in sewage treatment plants, garbage dumps and desert ravines. Most of the bodies showed signs of torture and execution-style killings. Many families of the deceased said their kin had last been seen in the back of a police vehicle.

The Shiites, who constitute about 60% of the Iraqi population, were severely repressed under Saddam Hussein's regime, which favored the Sunni minority. The Shiites came to power in the wake of the U.S.-led invasion of March 2003. A Sunni-led insurgency has carried out a campaign of bombings and assassinations against the government.

Over the last two years, Shiite militias within Iraq's security forces have been accused of staging reprisals for the Sunni attacks. Leading Sunni figures have blamed the reprisals on Jabr. Sunni political parties have made his removal from office a key issue in negotiations over whether they will take part in Iraq's Shiite-led government.

In a recent interview, Army Maj. Gen. Joseph Peterson, who is leading the multibillion-dollar effort to train and equip Iraq's police forces, vigorously defended the minister and said he was heartened by Jabr's pledge to investigate the abuse fully.

"Death squads — they're a real issue," said Peterson. "I can tell you, we caught our first death squad," he said, referring to the unit that was apprehended last month. "The minister of Interior is elated that we caught them," he added.

Peterson said U.S. and Interior Ministry officials were investigating the highway patrol squad to determine "where these guys came from and how they were organized and who was leading them and what was their purpose."

Army Maj. Gen. Rick Lynch, a U.S. military spokesman, said that the Interior Ministry was leading the investigation into the suspected death squad.

Ali Hussein Kamal, the Interior Ministry's intelligence chief, said in an interview Sunday that investigators were also trying to determine whether the Iraqi general in charge of the highway patrol was linked to the squad.

"If we find that these allegations that he is involved are true, we will be taking very firm measures against him," Kamal said. "But generally speaking, high-ranking officers are usually ignorant of what their lower-ranking officers are doing."

U.S. personnel who have been training Iraqi police officers said they long had suspected the highway patrol of conducting illegal raids and killings but had little oversight of the force.

The black-garbed highway patrol officers rarely attend U.S.-financed police academies aimed at improving professionalism and sensitivity to human rights within Iraq's security forces, police trainers said, and have refused to share information about their activities.

U.S. police advisors said the highway patrol was almost entirely Shiite and included a core of 400 to 800 Badr militia members who make up the patrol's 4th Company, which was created last year.

"The 4th Company is filled by people with unconventional militia ties," said the U.S. military officer who advises the Interior Ministry. "Minister Jabr is very supportive of them. The general in charge [of the highway patrol] is very supportive of them."

After the suspected death squad was stopped last month, U.S. police advisors said, four members of the squad confessed to several sectarian killings.

The highway patrol officers were asked, " 'Who are you doing this for?' " said a third U.S. military officer who is involved in training Iraqi troops and has knowledge of the interrogations of the suspected death squad. "And they're telling us, 'Jabr.' " The rest of the squad, said the advisor, has been released.

Sunni Arab leaders complain that an earlier investigation into alleged police abuse has yet to show results.

In November, a U.S. Army unit discovered a secret detention and torture facility run by police officers affiliated with the Badr militia. In all, 169 people had been detained at the secret prison, and photos showed that some inmates had been severely beaten and malnourished.

Jabr pledged to investigate the origin of the detention facility and the possible existence of other secret prisons, even as he downplayed the abuse that had taken place there.

"OK, there were signs of torture ... but there were no killings and no beheadings, as some have said," Jabr told reporters in November.

But inmates at the bunker compiled a list of 18 detainees who they said had been tortured to death.

Two U.S. Embassy officials said Monday that Iraqi authorities were conducting visits of Interior Ministry jails and prisons, but declined to release details about the facilities.

Kamal, the ministry's intelligence chief, said of the detention probe, "we are still investigating this, but it is better if we do this quietly, without any media."

Peterson, the U.S. officer in charge of Iraqi police training, said that so far, no other secret prisons had been discovered. U.S. officials were trying to help the Interior Ministry centralize and upgrade its detention system, he said, so that it would be more transparent and acceptable by international standards.

"I've seen all the reports that say there are secret prisons out there," Peterson said. "So where are they? We have not found them. We have gone out there and looked for them. Can they exist? Well, the bunker existed, so yeah, they can exist. Is the ministry trying to find these things? Well, yes, they are."

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Ex-Envoy: Execution Victims Spike at Baghdad Morgue

Ellen Knickmeyer, Washington Post Foreign Service

BAGHDAD, March 2 -- Nearly three years into a war epitomized by car bombs and suicide attacks, executions -- many of them following torture -- now account for up to three-fourths of the hundreds of corpses coming in to Baghdad's main morgue each week, the former U.N. human rights chief for Iraq said Thursday.

John Pace, who headed the U.N. human rights mission here until Feb. 13, said that between two-thirds and three-fourths of the victims brought to Baghdad's main morgue are recorded as casualties of gunshot wounds. Nearly all showed signs of having been executed, tortured or both, Pace said by telephone from his home in Sydney.

Pace said he held one of Iraq's factional militias principally responsible -- the Badr Organization, the armed faction of the Supreme Council for Islamic Revolution in Iraq, a Shiite Muslim religious party that is one of the most powerful members of Iraq's governing coalition.

"They have caused havoc," Pace said of the Badr group in a separate interview with the Associated Press. "They do basically as they please. They arrest people, they torture people, they execute people, they detain people, they negotiate ransom, and they do that with impunity."

Since the middle of last year, Shiite militias -- private armies that are sometimes closely integrated with the Shiite-dominated Interior Ministry -- have been accused of operating as death squads and of carrying out extrajudicial killings. The accusations have increased sharply over the past week, with the killing of hundreds of Sunni Arabs in retaliation for the Feb. 22 bombing of a Shiite shrine, the Golden Mosque in Samarra. Spokesmen for several factions have denied involvement in retaliatory killings.

An international official in Baghdad who is familiar with the tabulation of the death toll said Thursday that roughly 1,000 people were killed between the day of the bombing and Monday, when the government lifted a curfew imposed to stem the violence.

The international official, who spoke on condition he not be identified further, said the figure came from morgue officials and others before the government announced a much lower toll.

He said morgue officials and others acceded to the reduced official count because they feared the militias, the death squads and the government. "They're afraid," the official said.

Prime Minister Ibrahim al-Jafari said on Tuesday that 379 people had been killed since Feb. 22, and he described as inaccurate and exaggerated a Washington Post report that put the death toll at 1,300. The Post's tally was provided by a morgue worker, and an international human rights official who spoke on condition of anonymity said the source's job entailed close familiarity with the number of bodies the facility received.

The acting director of the morgue, Qais Hassan, also denied The Post's figure. "That's a lie," he said of the number on Thursday.

Hassan began running the morgue when the director, Faik Bakir, fled the country a few months ago after being threatened over the release of morgue information seen as linking many killings to death squads, officials said.

Another morgue official declined to comment, and the spokesman for the Health Ministry, which oversees the facility, did not answer his telephone Thursday. The Health portfolio is held by the party of the Shiite cleric and militia leader Moqtada al-Sadr.

The number of bodies processed by the Baghdad morgue has overtaken the toll from suicide and car bombings, most of which are blamed on Sunni Muslim insurgents. Morgue statistics are one way to measure cause of death in the cases of Iraqi victims of violence, because those killed by gunfire are taken to the city morgue, while victims of bombings are taken to hospital morgues because the cause of death is considered clear.

At the Baghdad morgue and in neighborhoods throughout the capital this week and last, families spoke of abductions by men wearing the black shirts and pants of the Mahdi Army, Sadr's militia.

In one Baghdad neighborhood Thursday, a widow draped in black said black-clad gunmen had burst into a mosque on Feb. 23 and abducted her husband and other men as they were finishing afternoon prayers. The captured men were subjected to a one-hour mock trial in a detention center near Sadr City, the heart of Baghdad's Shiite population and Sadr's base in the city, the widow said.

Some of the men were released, but her husband and three others were executed, she said. His family found his corpse in the Baghdad morgue on Saturday, shot in the face and chest, with his hands cuffed behind his back.

Fearful, the widow hesitated to say who she believed killed her husband. "Who is running the country?" she finally responded. "The Americans. The

Mahdi Army. The Badr Brigade. They are responsible."

She hushed her daughters and granddaughter when they assigned blame more specifically. "Mahdi Army," her 8-year-old granddaughter whispered into her ear. "Darling," the widow said, frowning and quieting the girl.

Sadr officials have rejected responsibility for the killings. Sadr aides said other factions' militiamen were adopting black clothes to deflect blame onto the Mahdi Army.

The explosion of slayings and resulting accusations unleashed by the mosque bombing follow nearly a year of charges by Sunni leaders that Shiite fighters in militias and in the Interior Ministry were carrying out widespread killings of Sunni men. The bodies of hundreds of Sunnis have been found dumped in various places around Iraq, after the men were abducted from Sunni or mixed neighborhoods and communities.

After numbering in the dozens each month before the U.S. invasion and roughly 500 a month in the first half of 2005, bodies processed at Baghdad's morgue peaked at about 1,100 last July.

In November, 555 of the 886 bodies brought to the morgue bore gunshot wounds, as did 479 of the 787 brought to the morgue in December, according to the U.N. mission in Iraq, which tracks deaths reported by Baghdad's morgue.

The figures "are believed to underrepresent the actual number of casualties," the United Nations said in a report.

While violent crime has surged in Iraq in the upheaval following the U.S. overthrow of President Saddam Hussein, and while Sunni insurgents use guns as well as bombs, public suspicion with regard to the spike in execution-style deaths has centered on the Shiite militias and security forces.

Jafari's government has denied the existence of death squads within the Interior Ministry. U.S. Army Maj. Gen. Joseph Peterson said last month, however, that American troops in January arrested a group of Interior Ministry police commandos on the verge of executing a detained Sunni man.

The international human rights official said workers were under growing pressure to minimize anything seen as linking killings to death squads. Even before the past nine days' sectarian violence, the official said morgue officials were reluctant "to give even the most basic information on the number of victims."

"You can see that, over time, attitudes have changed," the official said, citing "a mix of pressure not to divulge and fear that there will be repercussions."

Militiamen and insurgents alike had threatened morgue workers against conducting autopsies or doing other investigations that would link the killers to their crimes, Pace said. "They are told it is not necessary and not in their interests,'' he said.

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Iraq's death squads make the rules

Paul McGeough

Baghdad, March 11, 2006

THE Sunni imam in Baghdad's al-Salam City clings to sanity but his mixed community is a sectarian tinder-box and, increasingly, Sheikh Fadal Kalaf Jasam struggles to maintain his grip.

He has been working tirelessly to hold the community together, shuttling between Shiite and Sunni mosques and the offices and compounds of the US military, Iraqi security forces and the religious-backed militias that make up their own rules in the new Iraq.

But now he is tortured by indecision. The 42-year-old cleric fears information he is sitting on could spark the sort of sectarian violence not previously seen in his pocket of north-west Baghdad. There are about 3000 working-class families in the area — half Shiite, half Sunni.

Local gossip is filled with speculation about the fate of more than 50 locals who, two weeks ago, were dragged from their beds in the dead of night by masked gunmen.

All were carted away handcuffed and blindfolded. But Sheikh Fadal has been able to confirm that 12 were later shot in the head and their bodies dumped in nearby suburbs and on the other side of the city. Three of the bodies have been brought back to al-Salam City.

Hassan al-Rahami, a 50-year-old grain merchant, was punished for his membership of Saddam Hussein's Baath Party. Two other bodies were found on a garbage tip on Wednesday.

Sheikh Fadal has confirmed the other nine deaths from pictures filed at the central morgue where, he said, he was informed that the bodies had already been taken to Najaf, in the Shiite south, to be buried in a mass grave because their relatives had not claimed them.

The imam cannot decide if he should risk an explosion of Sunni anger by informing the community that so many of their brothers and fathers have been executed, or if he should just sit tight, leaving them to stew in a cauldron of suspicion and faltering hope.

"What can I tell them? I fear how they will respond."

The timing of the abductions meant they received little attention. In the midst of the crisis sparked by the bombing of the Shiites' revered Golden Mosque in Samarra on February 22, the unexplained disappearances in the early hours of the next day hardly rated as news.

As the country erupted in Shiite fury, al-Jazeera and al-Arabiya news channels ran ticker-tape reports of official denials of any involvement by

Iraq's US-trained security forces in the abductions. But chilling as it was, the story quickly died for want of detail and an explanation.

Now the finger of suspicion is falling on the Wolf Brigade, an Iraqi Interior Ministry commando unit that is frequently accused of running — or protecting — groups of freelance killers. These are the death squads that haunt liberated Iraq.

The mass abductions and killing of Sunni men, often by a signature gunshot to the back of the head, happen with increasing and disturbing frequency.

Members of Shiite religious militias loyal to the parties that control government, or units made up of their fighters who have been folded into the ranks of Iraq's security forces, are accused of using their government-issued weapons, uniforms, vehicles and licences to move during curfew as they take revenge against Sunnis for three years of the insurgency and 30 years of Saddam.

In January, US troops caught one of the squads red-handed, and 22 police commandos under the control of the Interior Ministry were arrested as they set about executing a Sunni hostage.

Observers were struck most by what was presumed to be US Army General Joseph Peterson's deliberate use of the plural when he told reporters: "We have found one of the death squads and we believe there's more of them out there."

The director of the Baghdad morgue, Fakir Bakir, recently estimated that the squads were responsible for as many as 7000 summary executions and the UN's outgoing human rights officer in Baghdad, John Pace, last week laid blame for most of the deaths at the feet of the Badr Badr Brigade, the militia wing of SCIRI, the Iranian-backed Supreme Council for the Islamic Revolution in Iraq, which is one of the biggest Shiite parties.

In a series of interviews this week, several people who witnessed or claimed to have direct knowledge of the February 23 round-up in al-Salam City claimed it was the work of the much-feared Wolf Brigade and, in the case of one well-informed source, that all the prisoners had been executed.

A man who was in a good position during the dawn raid is Commander Hytham Aboud al-Ameer, the leader in al-Salam City of the Mahdi Army, a militia run by the young firebrand Shiite cleric Muqtada al-Sadr. The Mahdi Army competes with the Badr Badr Brigade for turf and loyalty.

Commander Hytham was on guard duty on the roof of his house when a convoy of white, late-model vehicles, like those supplied to government agencies, swept into his street.

"Five vehicles without numberplates came into our street — four Chevrolets and a Nissan pick-up. There were many men with new-looking weapons. They had a list of names and a masked guide who pointed to houses and then to individuals when they were brought out.

"Ishmail Aghedi tried to put up a fight — he was in his bathroom with a gun, but they killed him. His brother, Uday, was killed in a separate attack on their real estate office 48 hours before this attack."

Such was the dawn show of Badr Badr force that the Mahdi Army commander made no effort to protect his turf. Admitting that he was afraid, he said that he opted to remain in the shadows and watch the Badr Badr boys at work: "They were very professional."

"They wore Iraqi police uniforms and I'm sure they were policemen because a few days later I saw some of the same vehicles with a US patrol when they returned to our neighbourhood to arrest Ibrahim al-Jabouri and his brother," Commander Hytham said.

"The Sunnis I saw being piled onto the Nissan pick-up were bad people — mostly from the al-Ghadi tribe. One of them worked with the insurgency and some of the others made two attacks on Shiite mosques. In the first they injured Akiel, the muezzin, and sent him to hospital for three weeks; the next time they sent him to his grave."

Commander Hytham explained that he had his own working relationship with the Wolf Brigade: "When our units captured criminals we used to give them to the Americans — but they were always released and came back to cause trouble; now we give them to the Wolf Brigade and they never come back.

"The al-Ghadi tribe accuses the Mahdi Army of these abductions, but I swear it was not us — it was the Badr Badr Brigade."

Another who observed the raid at close quarters was Abdul Latif Kathan, who was among those rounded up. The 30-year-old electrician is utterly confused — he was given no reason for his detention and no explanation for his release within a few hours of his capture.

"When they took us away, the Nissan drove for about 15 minutes and then pulled up at an office building where they switched us to a Landcruiser."

He said that nine prisoners were squeezed into the vehicle and, importantly, he remembered seeing the now dead grain merchant Hassan al-Rahami among those in the vehicle.

"After 10 more minutes we stop at a building where they locked us in a room. We are not blindfolded now, but they said anyone who opens his eyes is dead. Myself and three others were taken from the room — they swapped our handcuffs for plastic wire, made new blindfolds from strips of blanket and drove us to al-Waizeriah, where we were dumped at the back of the al-Bakir Military College."

On Thursday, Baghdad was taking a whipping from the tourab, a violent dust storm that strikes at this time of year. And in the still air of the National Security Ministry bunker deep inside the Green Zone, Abdul Karim Al-Enzey was whipping up his own storm of denial at The Age's suggestion that death squads were at work in Iraq.

"This is all the work of the residue of the Baath Party trying to start civil war," the Security Minister insisted. "These allegations against our security forces are an attempt to divide us. Never!"

Did the security forces give cover to killers from the Badr Badr Brigade or the Mahdi Army? "The Interior Ministry would not allow it. As a minister I'm fully

aware of what is happening — and what you claim is not happening. It's the duty of the Interior Ministry to attack terrorists. The local and foreign media are trying to stir sectarian violence but we're building the new Iraq on human rights and democracy."

The Shiite minister, a member of the Dawa religious party, explained that just because killers wore police uniforms it did not mean that they were policemen. He added, helpfully: "A lot of thieves in Australia wear police uniforms — that doesn't mean that all policemen in your country are thieves."

It has been a bad week in Iraq. Inevitably, the Sunni families of al-Salam City will hear of the fate of their men, and in the meantime Sheikh Fadal will wrestle with his limited options.

Publicly, the local Shiites sympathise.

But one man was quick to justify the actions of the death squads and what he saw as a shift in the balance of power.

He said: "We have a saying, 'If a man is not scared of the punishment he might get, he'll do anything.' The Sunnis in our district will not respond now — they know the punishment and they are scared. Look into their eyes — you can see it."

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Death Squads in Iraq

Robert Dreyfuss



March 9, 2006

I've been writing for more than two years on Iraq's Shiite-led death squads (see "Phoenix Rising," in *The American Prospect*). It's been an open secret at least that long. Since that time, the number of Iraqis kidnapped, bound and gagged, and executed – or simply gunned down in the streets – by pro-government Shiite gangs is incalculable. But it is likely to be in the range of

25,000 in two years.

Ellen Knickmeyer, writing in the *Washington Post*, has been doggedly following the story lately, and her latest piece slams the Iraqi government and the Supreme Council for the Islamic Revolution in Iraq (SCIRI), which controls the Interior Ministry, for trying to suppress information about the number of dead. The piece notes this stunning fact: that Shiite death squads are killing more people than the insurgents. Here's the relevant paragraph:

Execution-style killings of the kind frequently blamed on police or Shiite militias allied with the government appear to be killing more Iraqis than bombings of government and civilian targets by Sunni Arab insurgents.

She goes on to quote the cynical nonsense from a spokesman for the prime minister, who has the gall to blame "Baathists" for the killings, even though the overwhelming majority of those murdered are pro-insurgency Sunnis:

Abdul Razzaq Kadhumi, the prime minister's spokesman, declined Wednesday to give a breakdown of the figure of 379 execution-style killings given by Jafari. "These are obviously terrorist, Saddamist and Baathist acts against civilians, and they all go under victims of terrorism," he said.

The scale of the torture-murders is staggering. Here's John Pace, the former UN human rights chief in Iraq, whose sober claims on this topic have been widely reported (but with little investigative followup):

"The Baghdad morgue received 1,100 bodies in July alone, about 900 of whom bore evidence of torture or summary execution. That continued throughout the year and last December there were 780 bodies, including 400 having gunshot wounds or wounds as those caused by electric drills."

Pace has charged that uncounted torture-murders and executions have been in the range of 500-1,000 a month for a long time. You can read about Pace here, and see the transcript of his interview on Democracy Now! with Amy Goodman.

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Iraq: Thousands Killed By Government Death Squads

Doug Lorimer, Green Left Weekly

March 15, 2006

Faik Bakir, the director of the Baghdad morgue, has fled Iraq in fear of his life after reporting that more than 7000 people have been killed by Iraqi interior ministry death squads in recent months, John Pace, the outgoing head of the UN human rights office in Iraq, told the March 2 British Guardian.

Pace said the Baghdad morgue has been receiving 700 or more bodies a month. The figures peaked at 1100 last July — many showing signs of torture.

"The vast majority of bodies showed signs of summary execution — many with their hands tied behind their back. Some showed evidence of torture, with arms and leg joints broken by electric drills", said Pace. The killings had been happening long before the recent spate of sectarian killings following the February 22 bombing of a Shiite mosque in Samarra.

The Guardian reported that "Pace, whose contract in Iraq ended last month, said many killings were carried out by Shia militias linked to the interior ministry run by Bayan Jabr, a leading figure in the Supreme Council for the Islamic Revolution in Iraq (SCIRI)". SCIRI is the main party in the coalition of Shiite religious parties that heads the US-backed Iraqi government.

"The Badr brigade [SCIRI's militia] are in the police and are mainly the ones doing the killing", said Pace. "They're the most notorious."

While, most of those killed were Sunnis, the attacks were also directed against Shiites who joined with Sunnis to protest the mosque bombing. The February 24 British Independent reported that "gunmen at a makeshift checkpoint south of Baghdad murdered 47 people who had been demonstrating against the destruction of the Shia shrine at Samarra, bringing Iraq close to a sectarian bloodbath''.

"The victims were Shia and Sunni returning from a demonstration in the town of Kenaan, when they were dragged from their cars and killed. Their bodies were left in a ditch by the side of the road."
ADVERTISEMENT

The March 4 Washington Post reported that an "international official in Baghdad, speaking on the condition of anonymity", had told it that "about 1000 people had been killed" between the day of the Samarra mosque bombing and March 3, according to Iraqi morgue figures.

The Western corporate media seized upon the upsurge of killings that followed the Samarra mosque bombing to claim that Iraq is on the verge of "civil war" between its Shiite Muslim majority and its Sunni Muslim minority. The implicit and often explicit message that has accompanied the "Iraq-is-on-the-brink-of-civil-war" stories is that only the presence of the US and other foreign occupation troops is preventing Iraqi Shiites and Sunnis from massacring each other.

During the US war in Vietnam, supporters of the war also claimed that the withdrawal of US troops would lead to a "bloodbath" — while the US war machine slaughtered at least 3 million Vietnamese. The Western media claims that a "premature" withdrawal of the US occupation troops from Iraq will lead to a religious civil war there serve the same purpose — attempting to discourage domestic support for the immediate withdrawal of all those troops.

According to an ABC News/Washington Post poll released on March 6, "eight in 10 Americans believe that recent sectarian violence in Iraq has made civil war likely", Reuters reported on March 7. The poll found that "fewer than 20 percent of respondents support an immediate withdrawal of all US troops". However, 52% support a phased withdrawal over the coming year.

While the official White House line is to deny that Iraq is on the brink of a sectarian civil war, in the wake of the Samarra bombing at least one high-

ranking US official has publicly given it credence.

In testimony to the US Senate armed services committee on March 3, John Negroponte, the US national intelligence director, warned that "if chaos were to descend upon Iraq or the forces of democracy [i.e., the US occupation forces] were to be defeated in that country ... this would have implications for the rest of the Middle East region and, indeed, the world".

Negroponte was Washington's ambassador in Iraq from June 2004 to April 2005 — precisely at the time that the recruitment of local deaths squads was being considered in Washington.

In January 2005, Newsweek magazine reported that the "Pentagon is intensively debating an option that dates back to a still-secret strategy in the Reagan administration's battle against the leftist guerrilla insurgency in El Salvador in the early 1980s. Then, faced with a losing war against Salvadoran rebels, the US government funded or supported 'nationalist' forces that allegedly included so-called death squads directed to hunt down and kill rebel leaders and sympathizers."

According to the Newsweek report, Pentagon chiefs were considering the recruitment of death squads from among SCIRI's Badr militia, which had been incorporated into the US-recruited Iraqi security forces, to target Sunni resistance fighters and their sympathisers.

Negroponte would have been the man most qualified to supervise the implementation of such a death-squad program. While US ambassador to Honduras from 1981 to 1985, he supervised the recruitment by the CIA of local death squads from the Honduran army and police, and the arming of Nicaragua's anti-government contras.

Negroponte wasn't the only veteran of Washington's "dirty wars" in Central America to be brought into Iraq while the "Salvador option" was being considered. The November 16 New York Newsday reported that the interior ministry's commando units had been built up "over the past year under guidance from James Steele, a former [US] Army Special Forces officer who led US counterinsurgency efforts in El Salvador in the 1980s. Salvadoran army units trained by Steele's team were accused of a pattern of atrocities."

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Death Squads Terrorize Baghdad

Erwin Decker, Spiegel Online



Baghdad, March 16, 2006

Shiite death squads are spreading fear in Baghdad's Sunni neighborhoods. Meanwhile, politicians and police are growing powerless as the outbreak of a civil war becomes ever more likely in Iraq.

Death squads are stalking Sunnis in Shiite-dominated Baghdad neighborhoods.
When the men in black drive down his street, Ali Hasan al-Mahawish calls out to his playing children to come into the house immediately. He bolts the door, scared. This time it might be his family's turn. The men drive past at walking speed, clutching their guns. It's obvious they know exactly which houses the Sunnis live in. Mahawish is an engineer and a Sunni -- a potential victim of the death squads.

Death squads are becoming part of everyday life in Baghdad's Sunni neighborhoods. Sunnis living in the Khadamiya neighborhood are terrorized daily. Sometimes the men in black shoot randomly into their houses and backyards. Sometimes they give the residents five minutes to leave, then set fire to the house. Those Sunni's who aren't simply executed by their neighbors are being systematically driven out of the city's Shiite neighborhoods.

"Ethnic cleansing" in Baghdad?

According to a recent United Nations report, this type of "ethnic cleansing" has spread dramatically in Baghdad, a city of 6 million. And no one can stop the death squads, least of all the police. Six neighborhoods have already fallen prey to organized terror. Weeks have passed since the police was last seen in these neighborhoods, and Sunnis are now more afraid of the men in black than of the daily air raids.

You can protect yourself from bombs by not leaving the house, but the black-clad men come into your home. They claim to be avenging their murdered Shiite brothers. And there is no escape for their victims. Sunni politicians and clerics are their main targets. In the western suburb Abu Ghraib, a Sunni cleric was found shot in front of a mosque. Eye witnesses have identified the

killers as members of one of the death squads.

Ali Hasan al-Mahawish lives right next to Al Aimma bridge, which connects his neighborhood with that of Adhamiya, on the other side of the Tigris River. The bridge acquired notoriety when more than 500 pilgrims died on it during a mass panic last year. "My house is sitting right on the border between Sunnis and Shiites. Every day I'm reminded of the dangerous frontier that's been drawn right in the middle of Baghdad. It's already become a genuine front line."

A few days ago, sandbags were placed at the foot of the bridge, which has become a kind of shooting range for the Shiite militias. In the afternoon, civilians position themselves behind the sandbags, and gun barrels point in the direction of the Sunni neighborhood. Sometimes shots are fired. No car drives over the bridge after five in the afternoon. "It's worse than during the war three years ago," Hasan al-Mahawish says.

A Sunni, he once lived peacefully among his Shiite neighbors until about six months ago. "All of a sudden my neighbors have become suspicious," he complains, "even though they know I was never even in the Baath Party and was constantly harassed under Hussein." Ever since the black-clad men have started shooting through windows at night, Mahawish's family of nine has moved to the back of the house.

The family, which has access to water and electricity for only an hour a day, regularly spends this hour watching television to find out about the situation in Iraq. "If I want to have reliable information about my country, I watch foreign TV channels or go to an Internet café," the engineer says. There are now more than 170 newspapers, but none of them report independently. Every newspaper and every radio and TV channel depends on funds from the United States or from a political party. None of them criticize the occupation, and the Iraqi press has yet to report on the death squads.

The death squads

The death squads are well organized, and it's believed that some of the men may be renegade troops of the Interior Ministry. Kamal Hussein, an official at the Interior Ministry, has stated that the black-clad men are not acting on the orders of the government. But Interior Minister Bayan Jabr has long ceased to control his subordinates. The failure to create a new cabinet after the Dec. 15, 2005 elections has resulted in genuine power vacuum. General Rasheed Flayih, the commander of the Shiite-dominated Interior Ministry forces, claims they are independent of the Iraqi army. He doesn't deny the existence of death squads. Instead, he euphemistically refers to them as "Field Intelligence Units."

What is certain is that large parts of the death squads were recruited out of the Mahdi Militia of Shiite leader Muqtada al-Sadr. For several months in 2004, al-Sadr's militia conducted a guerrilla war against the Americans in the holy city of Najaf, from where they were eventually forced to retreat.

During a vehicle check in the neighborhood of New Baghdad, Americans recently found a hit list with the names of several hundred Iraqi ministry officials. The hit list was being carried by a policeman who is also a member of al-Sadr's Mahdi Militia.

Things don't look much different on the Sunni side. There, too, citizens are taking up arms. After several of their mosques were destroyed last week, the Sunni militias have attracted many new members, including a number of former soldiers. Help and support have been promised from the cities of Ramadi and Fallujah. Large numbers of weapons and fighters are said already to have arrived.

And there's no shortage of recruits. "I'll be the first to go to Baghdad and help my fellow Sunnis make sure there won't be any more attacks on mosques," says Mustapha Adnan, a 27-year-old engineering student from Fallujah. Sunni clerics claim that more than a hundred of their Baghdad mosques have already been damaged or destroyed.

The Sunni minority ruled Iraq for more than thirty years before Saddam Hussein was overthrown. But the balance of power has shifted since the elections. The Shiites -- who make up 60 percent of the Iraqi population -- control the new government. Human rights organizations and the US Army have criticized the crass human rights violations of the Interior Ministry. The situation in Iraq is becoming harder and harder to control. According to the Americans, the police and the army have been infiltrated by insurgents. Often terrorists force members of the police and the army to cooperate with them -- by kidnapping their children, for example.

With each incident, the authority of the state dwindles, and people no longer trust it to protect them. Every party and every organization -- no matter how small -- has its own militia. Every Iraqi is legally permitted to keep a Kalashnikov in his home. Even the US ambassador to Iraq, Zalmay Khalilzad, said recently that the US and its coalition partners have opened a "Pandora's box" by overthrowing Saddam. Ethnic tensions, he added, could not only cause a civil war in Iraq, they could also ignite the entire region.

Mahawish, the engineer, doesn't care what the politicians say. What he cares about is survival for himself and his family. The black-clad men on the frontline between Sunnis and Shiites have already achieved their main goal. Everyone is afraid, every day.

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Death Squad Democracy

Mike Whitney



Some of the 48 corpses found in a ditch at Nahrawan.
Photo: Paul McGeough

March 19, 2006

"I constantly read the analyses of foreigners or Iraqis who've been abroad for decades talking about the divide that has always existed between Sunnis and Shia in Iraq…That is simply not true". "Baghdad Burning"; girl blogger

The notion that Iraq is now consumed by civil war depends on a number of assumptions that are inherently false. First of all, it assumes that the Pentagon is ignoring the fundamental principle which underscores all wars: "Know your enemy". In this case, there's no doubt about who the enemy is; it is the 87% of the Iraqi people who want to see an immediate end to the American occupation. Therefore, the greatest threat to American objectives of permanent bases and occupation is the camaraderie that that manifests itself in the form of Arab solidarity or Iraqi nationalism.

To this end, the Pentagon, through its surrogates in the media, has created a "self-fulfilling" narrative that civil war is already under way. Most of the war coverage now makes it appear as though the violence is generated from ethnic tensions and sectarian hatred. But is it? Some of the more astute observers have noticed that other parts of the propaganda war, (like references to the "imaginary" al-Zarqawi) have vanished from the newspapers, as government spin-doctors are now devoting all their time to promoting their latest product-line; civil war.

In fact, if any of us were involved in the Pentagon's "pacification" plans we'd probably be doing the same thing. After all, the War Department is already overextended, so a plan had to be devised to divert attention from the occupation forces and get Iraqis to kill each other. The only reasonable choice is to incite "sectarian violence" and make civil war inevitable. That, of course,

is the task of the American trained death squads. (The New York Times has confirmed that the Interior Ministry death squads were trained by American forces)

For three years the Iraqi resistance has successfully kept American troops on the defensive; gradually taking control of more area, destroying pipelines and oil facilities at will, discouraging enlistment in the Iraqi Security Forces, and undermining public support among Americans (63% of who now believe the war was "a mistake")

These are the goals of every guerilla movement; a gradual erosion of public support, deflating morale, surprise attacks, and eliciting greater support from the general population.

It is clear that this has been a winning strategy for the resistance, and not one that they would abandon to pursue an ethnic/religious war.

So, where does the violence originate? Could it be that the independent militias are engaged in sectarian war without help from the greater resistance?

It could be, but it's not likely. Again, the only one who benefits from civil war is the US military; and it's clear that the military has no other option but to follow a "divide and rule" strategy. They simply don't have the human resources for any other plan.

In a larger sense, the "alleged" sectarian violence is consistent with what we have seen in previous CIA-run operations in El Salvador and Nicaragua. Cheney, Rumsfeld, and Negroponte are alumna of those conflicts (which, according to Cheney, succeeded quite admirably) so it's probable that they would apply what they have learned about counterinsurgency to the ongoing war in Iraq. The El Salvador-experiment proved that the masses can eventually be terrorized into compliance.

Isn't that what is taking place in Iraq?

In Iraq, terror is being used as a substitute for security, because the United States has no intention of providing the manpower or funding needed to maintain order.

Death Squad Democracy

Video footage of a massacre outside of Nahrwan, east of Baghdad, has appeared on the Internet showing the bodies of Shiite laborers who were allegedly killed by Sunni death squads. Journalist Paul McGeough was given the tapes and is planning to report on their content in the "Sydney Morning Herald". http: //www.informationclearinghouse.info/article12376.htm In one incident, four adults were pulled from their vehicle and either shot or stabbed to death in front of a 5 year old boy whose father was one of the victims. When the townspeople came to investigate the scene, they discovered the bodies of 48 men and women who had been dumped in a ditch. The corpses showed the signs of having been "systematically murdered. Most were shot but some appear to have been stabbed and mutilated".

It is the "stabbed and mutilated" part that should interest us. After all, the

intention of the Iraqi resistance is to gather greater support for their cause, not to alienate ordinary Iraqis through gratuitous acts of murder. If, however, this was the work of American-backed death squads, then the alternate goal of "governing through terror" has been achieved.

Journalist McGeough sticks with the same, feeble mantra as the establishment-media to explain the tragedy: "The current round of tit-for-tat sectarian violence was sparked by the bombing of the Samarra mosque—a holy site for Shiites. In the immediate aftermath, there were reports of many killings and fears that Shiite reprisals could see the country descend into a civil war."

Isn't this the official narrative?

The media insists that the destruction of the Golden-dome mosque was a "9-11-type event" which caused an up-tick in the bloodshed. But, was it? Or was it merely part of a broader (covert) strategy to foment civil war?

There's evidence that the plan to divert attention from the occupation forces is succeeding. In February the military reported less servicemen killed (31) than in any month in the last year.

Isn't this the goal?

In Max Fuller's seminal article "For Iraq, the 'Salvador Option' becomes Reality" the author disproves the idea "that sectarianism is a sufficient explanation for the violence in Iraq". Instead, Fuller says it is "structurally at the hands of the state as part of the ongoing economic subjugation of Iraq." http://www.globalresearch.ca/articles/FUL506A.html

It is simply impossible to grasp what is taking place in Iraq without reading Fuller's well-documented article. His clear-eyed analysis is invaluable in making sense of the apparent chaos:

"In Iraq the war comes in two phases. The first phase is complete: the destruction of the existing state, which did not comply with the interests of British and American capital. The second phase consists of building a new state tied to those interests and smashing every dissenting sector of society. Openly, this involves applying the same sort of economic shock therapy that has done so much damage in swathes of the Third World and Eastern Europe. Covertly, it means intimidating, kidnapping and murdering opposition voices."

Fuller backs up his observations with ample evidence; citing open-source material he has compiled in his research:

"What we do know, however, is that hundreds of Iraqis are being murdered and that paramilitary hit squads of the proxy government organized by US trainers with a fulsome pedigree in state terrorism are increasingly being associated with them."

The objective of the death squads is not simply to target one particular group or ethnicity, but to direct the violence outwards creating as much fear as possible in order to pacify the population.

Fuller winds up his polemic with a summary statement that confirms the long and bloody history of colonial wars:

"The pattern is repeated time after time in every imperialist so-called counter-insurgency war; for behind each and every one lurks the reality of exploitation and class war, and, as successive imperialist powers have shown, the bottom line in combating the hopes and dreams of ordinary people is to resort to spreading terror through the application of extreme violence."

The secretary general of the Association of Muslim Scholars, Hareth al-Dhari, said it even more succinctly than Fuller; "This is state terrorism."

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Human Rights Report
1 January– 28 February 2006

UN Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI)

Summary

1. The human rights situation in the country remains a matter of serious concern. Following the events of 22 February 2006, which included, the destruction of Al Askari Shrine in Samarra, there has been a marked deterioration in the security environment, resulting in hundreds of cases of killings, torture, illegal detention and displacement.

2. Serious allegations have been received by UNAMI Human Rights Office regarding the actions of some segments of the security forces, in particular the police and special forces, and their apparent collusion with militias in carrying out human rights violations. Allegations that "death squads" operate in the country grew stronger following the discovery by the Multi-National Forces in Iraq (MNF-I) and the Iraqi Security Forces of a suspicious group, acting within the structures of the Ministry of Interior. This re-affirms the urgent need for the Government to assert control over the security forces and all armed groups. Throughout the reporting period, insurgent activities, including terrorist acts, intensified after 22 February and continue to affect the civilian population.

3. The legality and the conditions of detention in Iraq, under the authority of the MNF-I and the Government of Iraq continue to warrant attention. UNAMI has repeatedly expressed concerns to relevant members of the Government about allegations of systematic human rights violations in detention centers under the direct or indirect control of the Ministries of Interior and Defense.

4. Minorities groups, including Palestinians, continue to be the victims of discrimination, labeling, detention and torture because of their alleged association with foreign Arabs supporting the insurgency. During the reporting period, specific religious groups have also been targeted.

Situation of human rights following 22 February 2006

5. On Wednesday 22 February 2006, following the destruction of the Al-Askari Shrine in Samarra, which was strongly condemned by the Special

Representative of the Secretary-General for Iraq Ashraf Qazi, serious incidents of violence erupted in and around Baghdad, in Basra as well as in other parts of the country, following the destruction of the Shia Al-Askari Shrine in Samarra by unknown perpetrators. Numerous killings reportedly took place, including public executions by militias, in Al-Baldiat, Saddr City and Al-Sha'ab areas of Baghdad. Street clashes and assaults by armed groups continued for days. Many individuals were reportedly detained at improvised checkpoints, or were abducted from homes and mosques. Several of those illegally detained were later found dead, often bearing signs of severe torture. The Human Rights Office received information that some were released after being severely tortured.

6. In retaliation for the Samarra bombing, a significant number of Sunni mosques were reportedly attacked, destroyed or damaged and clerics were among those assassinated[1]. Such attacks did not seem to have been spontaneous but rather revealed a degree of organization and the fact that the perpetrators had readily access to resources and equipment.

7. While the initial violence randomly targeted the Arab Sunni community, allegedly for their unproven association with the destruction of Al Askari Shrine, members of all communities were negatively affected by the unleashed violence and tit-for-tat attacks. There are no reliable means to accurately assess the number of casualties, the whereabouts of those missing, or the number of persons detained.

8. Serious abuses were also reported in Basra with many reported killings and attacks at local mosques. In one of the most serious incidents, inmates accused of terrorism detained inside the Basra's port authority were extra-judicially executed, reportedly, on 22 February by a group of approximately 70 armed men wearing bullet-proof vests. The men entered the detention facility and separated Shi'a and Sunni inmates, taking away five Iraqis, two Tunisians, two Egyptians, one Libyan, one Saudi, and one Turkish national. Ten of the twelve detainees were killed, while two survived the attack. On the same day, the headquarters of the Iraqi Islamic Party (IIP) in Basra was attacked by armed militias. Two IIP members were injured in the attack. Several hours later, men wearing black clothing reportedly took the two injured IIP members from the hospital and executed them.

Security Forces / Police operations

9. Following the destruction of the Samarra Shrine, the security forces faced formidable challenges and in most cases acted generally with professionalism to defend the Iraqi population from terrorist, sectarian or revenge attacks. For example, the security forces provided protection to mosques and funeral processions of those who were killed in the violence. UNAMI, however, remains concerned at reports that, on occasions, militias and elements of the Ministry of Interior would have colluded in the violence against civilians or would not have acted to stop or deter further bloodshed.

10. Over the last year, there have been persistent allegations that militia elements have joined the security forces and formed clandestine parallel structures. Police officers and members of the security forces, who were also previously militia members, tend to retain original loyalties or affiliations. Militias are being empowered throughout the country: in the North with the recruitment of thousands of former Kurdish militias (Peshmerga) in the police and armed forces. In other parts of the country, former members of militias

are also said to have joined the police and armed forces. Furthermore, existing militias are allegedly responsible for systematic acts of violence against members of the Sunni community and for carrying out illegal policing often in collusion with local security forces. It has been recently reported that Sunni Arabs have now formed their own militia, allegedly to counter Shi'a and Kurdish forces, and that neighbourhoods are forming armed "watch patrols" to cope with rising insecurity. Such developments undermine the effectiveness of the security forces in dealing with the security environment and may weaken their ability to maintain the rule of law. It is imperative that all armed forces maintain the trust of Iraqis by ensuring that its ranks are representative of all communities and that their actions work to reinforce the authority of the Government in line with its international obligations. Corruption is also reportedly endemic among the security forces.

Extra-judicial executions

11. The reporting period was also marked by numerous reports of summary executions and torture in and around Baghdad. A large number of extrajudicial killings, kidnappings and torture were reportedly perpetrated mainly by members of armed militias linked to political factions or criminal gangs. The same methods of execution-style killings are usually used: mass arrests without judicial warrant and extrajudicial executions with bodies found afterwards bearing signs of torture and killed by a shot to the head. Such extrajudicial executions are further fueling sectarian tensions.

12. During January and February 2006, many bodies continued to appear in and around Baghdad and in other places as a result of extrajudicial executions. In January 2006, MNF-I and Iraqi forces allegedly uncovered the existence of at least one possible death squad operating within the Ministry of Interior. Twenty-two men, dressed as special police commandos, were detained when driving with a man who was allegedly about to be executed. UNAMI welcomes the announcement of the Ministry of Interior regarding an inquiry into the alleged existence of such illegal factions inside the institution.

Ongoing military operations

13. Military operations conducted by the Multinational Force and Iraqi security forces, especially in the al-Anbar Governorate, have raised a number of human rights concerns as allegations of restrictions to freedom of movement, excessive use of force, mistreatment and theft during raids of private homes, evictions and demolitions of houses have been received by UNAMI. Such reports were reiterated during visits by UNAMI to Ramadi and Fallujah on 20 and 21 February 2006. UNAMI is following up on these allegations with the MNF-I and the relevant Iraqi authorities.

Population movements

14. UNAMI finds it encouraging that many reports in the aftermath of the Samarra bombing indicated acts of solidarity among the Iraqi citizens and communities, in the face of actions clearly intended to disrupt inter-communal relations. In addition, Friday prayers calling for national unity seemed to reflect the overwhelming desire of the Iraqi population, horrified by the upsurge in violence, for peace and security.

15. However, the Human Rights Office received reports that a number of Sunni and Shi'a families living in mixed neighborhoods were forcibly evicted

from their homes or left voluntarily because of threats of violence from militias, insurgents and other armed groups. Indiscriminate mortar attacks reportedly targeted civilian neighborhoods. Real concerns for their safety prompted some residents to move to areas where they constitute a majority. Such movements divide communities further, add innumerable socio-economic problems to the already significant displaced population in Iraq, and harden the consolidation of communities along sectarian lines. The return of those who were forcibly displaced from their homes due to the recent violence should be considered a matter of priority in order to help alleviate sectarian tensions. The calls for peace and respect for human rights expressed by political and community leaders should be accompanied by renewed efforts to ensure that such commitments are adhered to by their followers and that priority consideration is given to the creation of a strong national human rights protection systems – including the establishment of an independent national human rights commission as foreseen by the Constitution.

Attacks on civilians

16. The current level of conflict constitutes a major source of violation of human rights for the population of Iraq. General insecurity in the streets due to fighting often makes it too dangerous for civilians to access basic public services, such as schools or medical facilities.

17. The Ministry of Interior announced on 25 February that some 249 people were killed in the period 22-25 February[2]. Those figures reflect a new high in a trend that has been steadily increasing and provide an important indicator of the absence of protection of the right to life which still prevails at this time in Iraq. Women and children are also increasingly affected by the current security situation in Iraq.

Situation of minorities

18. UNAMI continues to receive disturbing reports that minorities, including Palestinians living in Iraq, are victims of human rights violations because of their perceived association with the insurgency. Palestinian refugees, a community estimated at 34,000 individuals who arrived in Iraq over the past three decades, suffer the same discrimination, labeling, stigmatization and profiling affecting other communities of foreign Arabs residing in Iraq (e.g. Syrians and Sudanese). Following the destruction of Al-Askari Shrine in Samarra, militias attacked Palestinians living in the neighbourhood of Baladiyat in Baghdad with mortars and indiscriminate fire on several occasions. The intervention of the MNF-I, assisted in stopping further violence. Since then, other attacks have taken place. Up to 10 Palestinians have been reported killed; others have been illegally detained and tortured or have disappeared.

19. The Christians of Iraq, among other religious groups, have also been targeted and continue to live in fear. On 29 January, car bombs targeted the Catholic Church of the Virgin Mary and the Orthodox Church in Kirkuk, the Saint Joseph's Catholic Church and an Anglican Church in Baghdad, killing at least three people and wounding nine. A car bomb also exploded outside the residence of the Apostolic Nunzio, without causing any casualties. Political and religious leaders from all communities condemned the attacks. The Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Ashraf Jehangir Qazi, condemned the explosions and called on Iraqi authorities and political leaders to commit themselves to the safety of all worshipers, and preserve the

sanctity of places of worship. In the days following the attack of 22 February, militias fired shot towards a church near Al Sadr City, lightly wounding a priest. The Human Rights Office also received reports that in the course of February, 150 Christian families moved from Mosul city to other areas in Ninewa Governorate where Christians constitute a majority because of increasing concerns for their security.

Freedom of expression

20. Journalists and other media professionals continue to suffer greatly due to insecurity, violence and harassment including, at times, by the authorities and the MNF-I. On 8 January 2006, in Baghdad the home of an Iraqi journalist was reportedly searched by the MFN-I and Iraqi forces, allegedly, without a warrant. He was reportedly hooded and taken for questioning and released hours later. An American female journalist, Ms. Jill Carroll, who was kidnapped on 7 January 2006 is still being kept hostage. The Iraqi interpreter working with Ms. Carroll was murdered during the kidnapping. On 22 February 2006, Ms. Atwar Bahjat, a well respected and well-known Iraqi journalist, was killed with two other media workers when reporting from Samarra.

21. UNAMI continues to follow attentively the case of Mr. Kamal Sayid Qadir, an Austrian citizen of Kurdish origin, who has been in prison in Erbil since 26 October 2005. Mr. Qadir was initially sentenced to 30 years in prison on 19 December 2005 for "endangering national security". On 26 February 2006, the Supreme Court of the Kurdish Region rejected the conviction and ordered a retrial under a lesser charge.

22. The Human Rights Office has also received reports of assassinations of and intimidation against students and academics in cities around the country. UNAMI HRO is verifying these reports and expresses its concern about any violation of human rights in the context of the right of freedom of opinion and expression.

Rule of law

Detention

23. The conditions and the legality of detention in Iraq remain a matter of particular concern. Overcrowding and the lack of judicial oversight remain problematic. According to the Ministry of Human Rights, as of 28 February 2006, there were total of 29,565 detainees -- 14,229 in the custody of the MNF-I; 8,391 in the custody of the Ministry of Justice; 488 juveniles under the custody of the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs; 5,997 held by the Ministry of Interior and 460 by the Ministry of Defense. These figures are higher than in previous months as the overall number of detainees continues to increase often as a result of mass arrests.

24. Internment for imperative reasons of security by MNF-I should be used sparingly and in full conformity with international law. Hundreds of detainees have been released by the administrative Release and Review Board, composed of members of the Iraqi Government and MNF-I. As MNF-I envisage transferring detainees to local authorities, there is a need to ensure that any legislation pertaining to detainees will be consistent with international law and best practice. Specifically, detainees have rights to due process within a reasonable period of time.

25. According to Coalition Provisional Authority Memorandum No. 3[3], individuals detained since 30 June 2004, should be either released or transferred to Iraqi criminal jurisdiction. Internment can be prolonged upon the approval of the Joint Detention Committee (JDC) aimed at reviewing the cases of individuals that have been held for 18 months (after 30 June 2004). The duration of the additional period of internment should be specified. The Human Rights Office hopes that the creation of the JDC, in late December 2005, will address the most urgent concerns of the internees and lead to their release or to a judicial review of their case.

26. The application of humanitarian law and human rights law is not mutually exclusive but complementary as stated by the Human Rights Committee in general comment No. 31 (2004) and UNAMI continues to hope that this situation with regard to detentions is swiftly addressed in a manner consistent with international human rights standards.

27. The Human Rights Office continues to receive accounts of arbitrary detentions by the Iraqi security forces despite marked improvements in detention practices, as reported by the Ministry of Human Rights, and regular public assurances by the Ministry of Interior that all detentions will be handled in accordance with the law. The Human Rights Office also continues to receive regular allegations and evidence of torture in detention centres, particularly not operated or controlled by the Ministry of Justice. Inspections are being carried out in places of detention under the control of the Ministry of Interior, Defense and Special Forces throughout the country. The inspections are led by Iraqi representatives of relevant Iraqi Ministries and supported by the MNF-I. According to credible information received, 5 places under the jurisdiction of the Ministries of Interior and Defense, or run by the Special Forces have been inspected so far. More inspections are underway. UNAMI encourages this process and calls for the reports resulting from those inspections to be made public.

Al-Jadiryia

28. UNAMI continues to remain interested in the work of the investigative committee formed after the discovery of Al-Jadiryia abuses in November 2005. The Special Representative of the Secretary-General and the High Commissioner for Human Rights sent a letter to the Prime Minister on 10 February 2006 expressing concern at the delay in publishing the results of the investigative committee and in bringing the perpetrators of human rights abuses to justice. In this respect, UNAMI welcomes the statements of the Acting Minister of Human Rights, Ms. Nermin Othman, requesting that charges are pressed against all those found to be responsible for the human rights abuses committed in the case of Al Jadiriya. UNAMI supports the calls for an international involvement in this investigation as well as and for a thorough review of all the conditions of detention in Iraq and stands ready to assist the Government of Iraq in these endeavours.

Impunity

29. The United Nations welcomes the decision of the Government of the United Kingdom to carry out a thorough investigation into the alleged abuse of Iraqi citizens in Basra, which allegedly took place during street protests in early 2004. All such allegations against either Iraqi or foreign forces should be thoroughly investigated and those found to be responsible be brought to

justice.

Trial of Saddam Hussein

30. UNAMI continues to closely follow the trial of Saddam Hussein and seven co-defendants accused for the 1982 killings of 148 residents in Al Dujail village. Following the resignation of the Presiding Judge Rizgar Hamad Amin and the appointment of Judge Raouf Rasheed Abdul-Rahman as his replacement, the defense team questioned the impartiality of the Iraqi Higher Tribunal. Disquiet was fuelled when certain Government officials blocked the promotion of the Deputy-Presiding judge Sae'ed Al-Hamashy due to his alleged membership of the Ba'ath Party.

31. The defendants' rights were at the core of the proceedings on 29 January after the ejection from the courtroom of Barzan Tikriti by the presiding judge following the former's outburst amounting to contempt. Subsequently, Saddam Hussein walked out of the courtroom followed by his team of privately-retained Iraqi and foreign counsel. The defense counsel for Saddam and the other accused then failed to appear in the courtroom, on 1 February. Demonstrating the non-absolute character of the right of the defendants to have the legal counsel of their choice, the court-appointed defense counsels were designated to ensure the continuation of the proceedings in accordance with Iraqi law. Those of the accused who appeared in court, on 1 February, signaled their disquiet with the replacement of their counsel. On 2 February, the accused refused to appear before the court but, on 13 February and on the order of the presiding judge, the defendants were compelled to appear. This gave rise to protests, in particular on the part of Saddam Hussein and Barzan Tikriti. All but one member of the privately-retained counsel were reinstated on 1 March. The prosecution has called all its witnesses to testify before the court and begun submitting documentary evidence to the presiding judge.

Institutional Capacity-Building Activities

32. The Human Rights Office continues to work towards strengthening Iraqi human rights institutions and build capacity for Iraqi Ministries and civil society organizations in order to develop a strong national human rights protection system and promote a culture of human rights and respect for the rule of law.

33. The Rule of Law Sectoral Working Group (ROL-SWG) met on 15 and 23 February in Baghdad under the chairmanship of the President of the Supreme Judiciary Council, Mr. Medhat Mahmood. The ROL-SWG process is intended as a tool to ensure coordination by various Iraqi ministries and the donor community through the facilitation of the Human Rights Office. Representatives of the ministries of Justice, Defense, Interior and Human Rights and the donor community participated in the meeting, chaired by the Chief Justice. The areas to be covered by the group include: support for the administration of justice (Police, Prisons Administration, Justice system); implementing human rights provisions in the Constitution; establishing a national human rights commission; ensuring human rights education and support for civil society organizations. The meetings were an opportunity to map out Iraqi needs and take stock of current donor assistance in the rule of law sector and to formulate an overall strategic plan for strengthening the administration of justice and the rule of law in Iraq in close cooperation with all UN agencies and programs as well as the World Bank.

33. Similar initiatives have been made in Basra where the Human Rights Office co-chairs the Informal Coordination Group on Rule of Law and Human Rights (RoLHR) together with a member of the Basra Council member. The first meeting was held on 20 January.

Non Governmental Organizations (NGOs)

34. The new civil society law regulating non-governmental organizations (NGOs), drafted by the Ministry of Civil Society, is a major source of concern. The draft law imposes harsh restrictions on both national and international civil society organizations. If approved, such law would hinder the work of NGOs and weaken their role. UNAMI finds encouragement in the commitment of many civil society organizations, particularly human rights organizations. They have approached the Human Rights Office and asked for support in strengthening the rule of law and the human rights situation in the country. In February, a group of eight local human rights NGOs launched an initiative under the motto "Deliver all weapons to the State" based on article 9 of the new Iraqi Constitution, which stipulates that: "The formation of military militia outside the framework of the armed forces is prohibited". The NGOs main demand is that all militias are disarmed and that the experience of the United Nations in disarming militias in Africa, Yugoslavia and Latin America be also used in Iraq.

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[1] According to the Iraqi Islamic Party, about 96 Sunni mosques were damaged in Baghdad, 8 in the Lower South (Diwaniya, Basra and Nassariya); 2 in Babil and 2 in Diyala. At least 20 Imams and Sheiks were assassinated in Baghdad and Basra and about 9 detained according to the same source.

[2] These official figures correspond to the bodies brought to the Medico Legal Institute in Baghdad during the period 22-26 February. They are not inclusive of many victims who were not taken to the Institute. Some commentators mentioned that those were conservative estimates.

[3] CPA Memorandum No. 3 "Criminal Procedures", dated 27 June 2004.

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Death Squads in Iraq: A Timeline

Daisy Cutter, Daily Kos



March 23, 2006

Recently Think Progress made a timeline of major events in the Iraq war. It is very informative, but I noticed that one of the most disturbing aspects of the Iraq war was missing. There is absolutely no mention of the existence of Shiite death squads that work within the Iraqi government that the U.S. is currently arming and training. Ever since the `Salvador Option' story broke I've been keeping track of numerous news stories about these allegations. I've put together all my findings in timeline form. If you have any informative articles about death squads in Iraq please submit them in your comments.

January 14, 2005: Newsweek breaks the "Salvador Option' story.
(Newsweek)

January 25, 2005: Human Rights Watch releases a damning report alleging torture and mistreatment of detainees by the new Iraqi government.
(Human Rights Watch)

April 28, 2005: The new Iraqi government is approved. The Supreme Council for Islamic Revolution wins control of the Interior Ministry. The new minister is Bayan Jabr.
(Juan Cole)(PBS)

May 1, 2005: Many of the same men in charge of training El Salvador's right-wing counter-insurgency forces during its bloody civil war are revealed to be advisors to Iraqi security forces.
(NYT Magazine)

May 16, 2005 55 dead bodies are discovered in Iraq.
(CNN)

May 22, 2005: An elite group of commandos known as the Wolf Brigade is profiled by Knight Ridder. The group is notorious for its brutal treatment of detainees.

(Knight Ridder)

June 12, 2005: 20 bodies are found around Baghdad. Many of them show signs of torture.
(CNN)

June 28, 2005: Numerous Sunni males turn up dead after being detained by men wearing police uniforms.
(Knight Ridder)

July 7, 2005: Horrifying descriptions of torture by Iraqi security forces emerge.
(The Observer)

September 8, 2005: The U.N. expresses concern over abuses by pro-government forces in Iraq.
(Reuters)

September 16, 2005: CBS reports on the torture and execution of numerous Sunnis.
(CBS News)

October 7, 2005: At least 537 bodies have been found since April, many of them Sunnis.
(Associated Press)

October 12, 2005: Sectarian hatred extends itself into the Iraqi military.
(Knight Ridder)

November 15, 2005: U.S. Forces discover a secret torture center run by Iraq's Interior Ministry.
(Washington Post)

November 27, 2005: Former Iraqi Prime Minister Ayad Allawi claims that the human rights situation in Iraq is just as bad, if not worse, than it was under Saddam.
(CNN)

November 28, 2005: Abuse of prisoners in Iraq is called routine.
(Knight Ridder)

Interior Minister Bayan Jabr defends the alleged torture camp.
(CNN)

November 29, 2005: The NY Times and LA Times both run stories about allegations of Shiites running death squads that target Sunnis.
(Los Angeles Times)(New York Times)

December 11, 2005: Torture is discovered at a second Interior Ministry run prison in Iraq.
(Washington Post)

December 27, 2006: US refuses to handover jails and prisons to Iraqis until conditions improve

(Times Online)

January 22, 2006: Iraqis attempt to find officials without ties to militias.
USA Today

January 25, 2006: Sunni leaders urge followers to defend against deadly house raids.
(Knight Ridder)

February 5, 2006: 14 blindfolded tortured bodies found in Baghdad, called common occurrence.
(Washington Post)

February 16, 2006: Iraq's government launches investigation into death squad claims after US general catches Iraqi policemen about to execute a Sunni.
(BBC News)

February 22, 2006 Powerful blast destroys Golden Mosque in Samarra. Shiites swear revenge.
(New York Times)

February 23, 2006: 47 predominantly Sunni workers are stopped at a checkpoint and massacred outside Baghdad.
(Knight Ridder)

February 26, 2006: Andrew Buncombe and Patrick Cockburn report that hundreds of Iraqis are being tortured to death every month by Interior Ministry death squads.
(The Independent)

February 28, 2006: Violence since mosque explosion kills more than 1,300 Iraqis.
(Washington Post)

March 2, 2006: Director of the Baghdad morgue claims that up to 7,000 people have been killed by death squads in the past several months.
(The Guardian)

March 8, 2006: the State Department criticizes the Iraqi government's human rights violations in its annual report.
(State Department)

Gunmen dressed up as Interior Ministry commandos raid a private security company and abduct 50 people. A US Military patrol comes across a bus with the bodies of 18 men piled up inside.
(Washington Post)

March 12, 2006: Iraqi officials admit to the existence of death squads operating from inside the government.
(Knight Ridder)

March 14, 2006: Iraqi authorities find 80 dead bodies over the course of two days.

(BBC News)

March 20, 2006: The US continues to arm and train the same Iraqi security forces accused of having a sectarian bent and committing numerous massacres.
(Time)

March 22, 2006: The U.N. demands that the Iraqi government reign in their abusive security forces.
(UN News Centre)

March 23, 2006: A gay rights group run by Iraqi exiles claims that the Badr Brigade is launching a campaign of "sexual cleansing" against Iraqi homosexuals..
(Gay City News)

I will continue to update this page as more stories about death squads emerge.

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Iraq: Neocon Strategy Is One of Civil War

John Walsh

Arab News, March 24, 2006

One of the abiding myths about the war on Iraq is that the neocons were too stupid to realize that they would confront an unrelenting, indigenous resistance to their occupation of Iraq. Unwittingly, the story line goes, they led the US into a conflict which has now produced a civil war.

But this simply does not fit the facts. The neocons clearly anticipated such an outcome before they launched their war as Stephen Zunes documents in Antiwar.com: "Top analysts in the CIA and State Department, as well as large numbers of Middle East experts, warned that a US invasion of Iraq could result in a violent ethnic and sectarian conflict. Even some of the war's intellectual architects acknowledged as much: In a 1997 paper, prior to becoming major figures in the Bush foreign policy team, David Wurmser, Richard Perle, and Douglas Feith predicted that a post-Saddam Iraq would likely be "ripped apart" by sectarianism and other cleavages but called on the United States to "expedite" such a collapse anyway."

Yet the line persists that the neocons had no idea what they were getting into. This cannot be correct as they think a lot about what they do and they plan carefully. Not only is that charge absurd on the face of it, but it is arrogant on the part of those who level it. And it is the worst political mistake possible — underestimating your adversary.

Now the neocons are beginning to advocate for civil war in Iraq quite openly. The clearest statement of this strategy as yet comes from pre-eminent neocon and ardent Zionist Daniel Pipes. In a recent piece in the Jerusalem Post, Pipes spills the beans. He writes: "The bombing on Feb. 22 of the

Askaria shrine in Samarra, Iraq, was a tragedy, but it was not an American or a coalition tragedy. Iraq's plight is neither a coalition responsibility nor a particular danger to the West. Fixing Iraq is neither the coalition's responsibility, nor its burden. When Sunni terrorists target Shiites and vice versa, non-Muslims are less likely to be hurt. Civil war in Iraq, in short, would be a humanitarian tragedy, but not a strategic one."

As ever Pipes's anti-Arab racism is simply too rabid to be hidden. If Muslims are busy killing other Muslims, then "non-Muslims" are less likely to be hurt!! What does that say about Muslim lives? And of course both Sunnis and Shiites must be labeled "terrorists." Pipes is doing nothing more endorsing than the oldest of colonial strategies: Divide et impera.

Pipes envisions other "benefits" to the civil war "strategy," such as inhibiting the spread of democracy in the Middle East. Pipes again: "Civil war will "terminate the dream of Iraq serving as a model for other Middle Eastern countries, thus delaying the push toward elections. This would have the effect of keeping Islamists from being legitimated by the popular vote, as Hamas was just a month ago."

And finally Pipes declares that a civil war "would likely invite Syrian and Iranian participation hastening the possibility of confrontation with these two states, with which tensions are already high." It is no secret that the neocons have been aching for the US to strike at Iran and Syria, so here too the civil war strategy of the neocons makes good sense to them. Of course the added death and destruction is not their problem since the victims will be Muslims and some unwitting American soldiers.

There seems to be only one fly in this neocon ointment. That is, will it be possible to control the flow of oil in the midst of turmoil in Iraq. Here I suspect the neocons who put Israel first might have their differences with the oil barons, presently their allies. But the neocons have certainly given a lot of thought to that, and it probably explains why the location of the large and permanent US bases in Iraq is not known. It would seem, however, that there are great uncertainties in this and it may cause some trouble among the neocons and their allies over the longer term.

The only real question is whether the civil war emerged spontaneously as Wurmser, Perle and Feith predicted or whether the Iraqis had to be goaded into it by the US. Given all the intrigues and mysteries in Iraq, including the bombing of the Askaria shrine in Samarra and the shadowy death squads and torture chambers which the US claims to know nothing about, the latter seems more likely as of now.

It certainly fits the civil war strategy, and it is quite reminiscent of the Iran-Iraq war in which the US and Israel fanned the flames that consumed over 1 million Muslim lives

The fact is that the neocons who control US strategy have no interest in preventing a civil war but only in inciting one. Sectarian tensions were virtually unknown in Iraq before the US invasion.

And in fact the Iraqi Shi'is fought loyally as Iraqis against Iranian Shi'is in the disastrous Iran-Iraq war. So to avoid an Iraqi civil war, the most important step is to get all the US troops home and thus to terminate US provocations. For it is now crystal clear that the neocon strategy is one of civil war to divide

and destroy Iraq; and such a strategy amounts to a crime against humanity.

— John Walsh can be reached at jvwalshmd@gmail.com .

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Saddam's pilots hunted down by death squads

Ali Rifat and Hamoudi Saffar, The Sunday Times

April 8, 2006

IRAQI pilots who flew in Saddam Hussein's air force are being targeted by armed militias in an apparent witch-hunt against veterans who fought in the war against Iran two decades ago.

According to official military statistics, 182 former pilots and 416 senior military officers had been killed by the beginning of January 2006 as part of the campaign. At least 836 pilots and high-ranking military officials have fled to neighbouring Arab states.

Many of the assassinations have been blamed on militias from the Shi'ite Badr Brigade who were trained and financed by Iran and who now form the backbone of Iraq's police and special forces.

A delegation of more than 1,000 members of the former military elite — mainly from the Sunni minority — appealed recently to President Jalal Talabani to intervene to end the attacks.

The officers and their families have accused Iran of inciting Iraq's Shi'ite militias to carry out acts of vengeance. The organised nature of the attacks has reinforced their claims that elements within the Iranian-backed government are behind the attacks.

"Anyone who participated in the former war against Iraq is now a target, not knowing when the death sentence will be carried out against him," said the brother of Imad Mohammed Marhoon, a pilot assassinated last December. "We cannot escape and we are unable to defend ourselves. We are the walking dead."

The attacks have occurred against the backdrop of worsening sectarian strife between the Shi'ite majority and the Sunnis who dominated Iraq under Saddam.

Shi'ite religious leaders issued an appeal for calm after at least 85 people died in an apparent triple suicide bomb attack on a important Shi'ite mosque in Baghdad on Friday. As their funerals were held yesterday, another six people were killed by a car bomb near a Shi'ite shrine in Musayyib, 40 miles south of the capital.

The problem has been exacerbated by the continued political vacuum in Iraq, caused by the refusal of Ibrahim Jaafari, the interim prime minister, to step

down, despite pressure from America and Britain for the formation of a permanent government of national unity.

The individual killings, meanwhile, continue. A 57-year-old man, who declined to be named, described last week how he and two former pilots, Major-Generals Qathem Chaloob and Suad Bahaa al-Deen, were kidnapped last month during late afternoon prayers when 30 men, dressed in black, raided a mosque in Baghdad.

In front of a police checkpoint, the three men were dragged away by the armed kidnappers. According to the man, he and his companions were beaten, abused and tortured before the pilots were separated from other civilian captives.

"They beat us with electric cables and logs all over our bodies and we could hear them receiving telephone calls in the interrogation room next door. Sometimes they were told to release people, other times to kill others," he said.

"When Major-General Suad demanded that he speak to the man in charge, they beat him continuously for 15 minutes and after that none of us dared utter another word."

The man was eventually released when his captors were convinced he was not linked to Saddam's former military forces. A day later the bodies of his two pilot friends were found near the mainly Shi'ite Sadr City. Suad's hands had been cut off, his head had bullet and axe wounds and a hole had been drilled into his neck.

In another incident last month, gunmen wearing uniforms of Iraq's interior ministry commandos raided a private security company in the centre of Baghdad, kidnapping more than 35 employees.

At least 20 of those abducted were former high-ranking Sunni pilots in Saddam's air force. Witnesses said the kidnappers were armed and they arrived in a large convoy of military vehicles, backed up by two trucks mounted with heavy machineguns. They have not been seen since.

The interior ministry has denied involvement in the daylight raid, but ministry sources alleged that the gunmen were from its major crimes unit.

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Iraqi death squads 'not police'

Bayan Jabr interview

Iraq's interior minister has admitted death squads and other unauthorised armed groups have been carrying out sectarian killings in the country.

But in a BBC interview, Bayan Jabr denied allegations that these groups were linked to his ministry.

Mr Jabr blamed the proliferation of civilian security companies and licensed protection agencies used by other government ministries.

Sunni Muslims say government-backed Shia militias are behind many attacks.

The BBC's Andrew North in Baghdad says that every day more victims of Iraq's sectarian strife turn up. Corpses bound and shot are dumped at the roadside.

HAVE YOUR SAY
Very little can be done to stop sectarian violence if to sides are determined to carry it out
Steve Smith

The US military says more than 1,300 civilians were victims of sectarian violence last month alone.

Some analysts believe the real figure is much higher, as many bodies are never found.

'Out of order'

In his interview with the BBC, Mr Jabr said despite appearances, those involved in recent attacks were not genuine police officers.

"Terrorists or someone who support the terrorists... are using the clothes of the police or the military," he said.

[Attackers] are using the clothes of the police or the military - Now you can go to the shop and buy it
Bayan Jabr
Iraqi Interior Minister

"Now you can go to the shop and buy it."

He said problems also stemmed from the existence of non-governmental security agencies like the Facility Protection Service, an armed force set up during the US-led administration of Iraq in 2003 to guard official buildings.

Mr Jabr called the 150,000-strong FPS "out of order, not under our control". He also implicated the involvement of about 30,000 civilian security guards operating in Iraq.

Sectarian tensions have been high since the bombing of a Shia shrine in Samarra in February.

In the latest violence on the ground:

- A suicide car bomber strikes in the northern city of Talafar, killing two shoppers at a vegetable market
- Three civilians die in a roadside bombing in Baghdad
- Three government employees are gunned down in different attacks in the capital
- A car bomb explodes in Khalis, north of Baghdad, killing two
- Two US soldiers die in a roadside bomb, with a third reported killed in Baghdad.

A delay in reaching agreement on a new government is thought to be partly responsible for fuelling the violence.

Parliament is due to convene next Monday - for only the second time since elections four months ago.

"There are signs that there will be agreement on all problems concerning formation of the government," the speaker, Adnan Pachachi, told reporters.

Arab foreign ministers are due to meet in Cairo on Wednesday to discuss the violence in Iraq. The Baghdad government is not taking part.

Last week Egypt's Hosni Mubarak suggested that a civil war was imminent in Iraq.

Prime Minister Ibrahim Jaafari - who has the support of the Shia bloc - on Sunday dismissed the claim.

Story from BBC NEWS:
http://news.bbc.co.uk/go/pr/fr/-/1/hi/world/middle_east/4901786.stm

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US allies are behind the death squads and ethnic cleansing

Iraq's American overlords at last seem to have grasped the danger posed by their friends' militias. But it may be too late

Jonathan Steele in Baghdad
Friday April 14, 2006
The Guardian

Much ink, as well as indignation, is being spent on whether Iraq is on the verge of, in the midst of, or nowhere near civil war. Wherever you stand in this largely semantic debate, the one certainty is that the seedbed for the country's self-destruction is Iraq's plethora of militias. In the apt phrase of Zalmay Khalilzad, the US ambassador in Baghdad, they are the "infrastructure of civil war".

He is not the first US overlord in Iraq to spot the danger. Shortly before the formal transfer of sovereignty to Iraqis, America's then top official Paul Bremer ordered all militias to disband. Some members could join the new army. Others would have to look for civilian work.

His decree was not enforced and now, two years later, this failure has come back to haunt Iraq. "More Iraqis are dying from militia violence than from the terrorists," Khalilzad said recently. "The militias need to be under control."

His blunt comment came in the wake of over 1,000 abductions and murders in a single month, most of them blamed on Shia militias. Terrified residents of Baghdad's mainly Sunni areas talk of cars roaring up after dark, uninhibited by the police in spite of the curfew. They enter homes and seize people, whose bodies turn up later, often garotted or marked with holes from electric drills - evidence of torture before assassination.

Khalilzad's denunciation of the militias was an extraordinary turnaround, given that the focus of US military activity since the fall of Saddam Hussein has been the battle against foreign jihadis and a nationalist Sunni-led insurgency. Suddenly the US faces a greater "enemy within" - militias manned by the Shia community, once seen by the US as allies, and run by government ministers.

The new line, if it sticks, marks an end to previous ambiguity. Under Bremer there was a tendency to see some militias as good, that is on the US side, such as the peshmerga fighters that belong to the two large Kurdish parties, and others as bad, such as the Mahdi army of the Shia cleric, Moqtada al-Sadr, who opposes the occupation.

A third militia, the Badr organisation, was also tolerated. It is the armed wing of the Supreme Council for the Islamic Revolution in Iraq, a leading Shia political party which supported the invasion and is Washington's main interlocutor in the Shia coalition.

US officials paid lip service to the need to disband the militias, but never showed any sense of urgency. As a Pentagon report to Congress put it last year: "The realities of Iraq's political and security landscape work against completing the transition and reintegration of all Iraq's militias in the short term."

Iraqi leaders praised the militias, claiming they were subordinate to the defence and interior ministries, and therefore in no way a rogue element. The Badr organisation has even been put in charge of defending the home of the Shias' revered religious leader, Grand Ayatollah Ali al-Sistani.

The prime minister, Ibrahim Jaafari, described the Badr organisation last summer as a "shield" defending Iraq, while the president, Jalal Talabani, claimed the Badr organisation and the peshmerga were patriots who "are important to fulfilling this sacred task, establishing a democratic, federal and independent Iraq".

The flaw in the picture was that while the Kurds and Shias had two militias each, the Sunnis had none. Sunni chiefs could rustle up a few gunmen from extended family ranks, when necessary, as had been done for centuries, but there was nothing on the scale of Badr, the Mahdi, or the peshmerga. Many Sunnis welcomed the anti-occupation insurgents as a kind of surrogate militia.

Sunni anger increased with evidence of secret prisons, run by the interior ministry, where hundreds of men and boys, mainly Sunnis, were tortured, and of "death squads" operating against Sunnis. In response, Baghdad's Sunni neighbourhoods have started to form vigilante groups to defend their turf.

US officials now view the militias differently. Phasing them out by integrating their members into the official forces of law and order is seen as risky, unless the leadership changes. In February this year the new Pentagon line was that integration could result in security forces that "may be more loyal to their political support organisation than to the central Iraqi government", according to a new study, Iraq's Evolving Insurgency and the Risk of Civil War by Anthony Cordesman, an Iraq expert at Washington's Centre for Strategic and International Studies. Now the US is trying to

ensure that political control over the interior and defence ministries is jointly managed by an all-party security council.

The encouraging signs are that Iraqi leaders are denouncing sectarian violence. Provocations such as last week's suicide attack on a Shia mosque in Baghdad appear to be the work of "outsiders". No one has claimed responsibility, but they were probably planned by agitators, foreign or Iraqi, who want to split Iraq's fragile society for their own political ends. There is also comfort in the fact that sectarian street murders stem from militias who are controllable rather than from unorganised mobs.

Just as generals do, diplomats and journalists tend to refight the last war. Schooled in Bosnia and Kosovo, Washington's officials came to Iraq with the notion that because some Iraqis were Shia and others Sunni, these identities were bound to clash. This simplification was accepted by much of the media, influenced by their own Balkan experiences. It gathered weight when people watched the sectarian behaviour of Iraq's religious leaders, particularly among the Shia. They had led the resistance to Saddam and saw no reason to retreat from politics once he was gone.

In fact Iraq has no history of Balkan-style pogroms where neighbour turns against neighbour, burning homes and shops. But it could develop now. The rampaging by Shia militias and the rise of defensive Sunni vigilantes have launched a low-intensity ethnic cleansing. Up to 30,000 people have left their homes in the last few weeks.

The crucial question is whether the militias can be rolled back at this late stage. Having allowed them to defy their initial banning orders, as well as Iraq's new constitution, which outlawed them, can the US persuade or force its Iraqi allies to disband them? Confronting the Sunni insurgency means, in crude terms, confronting an enemy. Confronting the biggest militias, Badr and the Kurdish peshmerga, means the US must confront its friends.

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http://www.guardian.co.uk/commentisfree/story/0,,1753711,00.html

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Who wants civil war in Iraq?

Workers World

Published Apr 15, 2006

It is normal for capitalist governments to lie through their teeth to justify war and aggression. Even allowing for this normal deception, the Bush administration suffers from a wider than usual credibility gap. If Bush says "It's a beautiful day," one's first impulse is to scan the sky for clouds and check that you've brought your umbrella.

So when George W. Bush, Donald Rumsfeld, the Pentagon generals and the U.S. ambassador to Iraq say they are trying their hardest to avoid "civil war" in that occupied oil-rich country, it's even more normal to suspect that U.S. agencies are provoking that civil war, creating incidents that encourage different parts of the Iraqi population to fight each other and in general using

"divide and conquer" tactics that British imperialism, now a U.S. junior partner, used in the heyday of the Empire.

The suspicious bombing of the golden dome mosque in Samarra in February began a rapid increase in the killings of civilian Iraqis. Even worse for the Iraqis, many of the killings appeared to be pitting members of the Sunni Moslem religious group against members of the Shiite group. No organization ever took public responsibility for the bombing, and the killings were carried out by private militias, often masked and of unclear origin.

What arouses greater suspicions is that some U.S. strategists began at the end of 2004 to suggest the U.S. occupation adopt the "Salvador option." The headline in a Jan. 14, 2005, Newsweek article was: "The Pentagon may put Special-Forces-led assassination or kidnapping teams in Iraq," just as it did in El Salvador to kill Salvadoran progressives, unionists and any civilians in the way, and just as it did with the "Phoenix Program," another death-squad venture in Vietnam. Once it became clear that "shock and awe" had failed to subdue the Iraqis, this bloody option started gaining support in U.S. imperialist circles.

To add substance to these suspicions, the Iraq puppet government's interior minister, up to now someone who cooperated with the U.S. occupation, has admitted that death squads and unauthorized armed groups have been carrying out sectarian killings in the country. In a BBC interview on April 11, Bayan Jabr denied these groups were his responsibility. He added that there are non-governmental armed groups called the Facility Protection Service, set up in 2003 by the U.S. occupation, that number 150,000 effectives. Jabr said these 150,000 hired guns are "out of order, not under our control," along with another 30,000 private security guards.

This total of armed agents is even more than the number of regular U.S. troops operating in Iraq. Whatever ax Jabr has to grind, his comments mean the U.S. has a wide supply of mercenary personnel capable of carrying out provocations and acting as death squads—in other words, executing the "Salvador option." The Bush administration has certainly proved capable of lying about such a strategy. Anyone born earlier than yesterday can only assume it is lying once again.

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B*Russell*s Tribunal Dossier
Introduction to the "Salvador option" and Iraq's "Death squads" - *PART 2* -

THE BRUSSELLS TRIBUNAL
PEOPLE VS TOTAL WAR INCORPORATED



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***** **Read also: "Introduction to the "Salvador option" and Iraq's "Death squads" - *PART 1* –** (*http://www.brusselstribunal.org/pdf/DeathSquads.pdf*)

A - B*Russell*s Tribunal Resources

Death Squads in Iraq
Fanatic Militias Used in a Dirty war
07 June 2006.
(Name of Iraqi author withheld for security reasons)

Okhwan Sinna wa Shi'a, hatha alwatan ma nbi'a (We are brothers, Sunnis and Shiites; we are not selling this homeland)
This slogan was chanted by the Iraqis in Baghdad and other provinces days after the occupation in April 2003, denouncing any sectarian division in the Iraqi society, on every occasion. There was hope. Until very recently, in spite of all the killings, Iraqis were million per cent confident that there is NO sectarian sensitivity between the Shiite and the Sunnis.

Now, death on seemingly sectarian bases is the strongest reality in Iraq. Families are afraid to show up at the morgue or the hospitals to collect a killed son's body because of the armed militias who might be hiding in disguise around the corner.
Heads of young men are rolling in the streets like watermelon, they were kidnapped near the morgue. In the first five months of 2006, directly after the elections which was supposed to stop the killing and establish (democracy) in Iraq once and for the coming four years, and the Samara Shrine explosions, the Baghdad morgue was receiving 35-50 daily, according to Dr. Qais Hassan, a director in the morgue (1).

Six thousands Baghdadis' bodies were brought to the central morgue in the last 5 months (for the first time in its history).
In May alone the bodies were 1,398. according to the Ministry of Health, not including victims of explosions.
It was the bloodiest month since the occupation.

In Basra, which was relatively calm until the last elections, more than one thousand were killed in the same period (not including May).
In May the number exceeded the last few months together that prime minister Maliky had to impose martial laws on the city, it is said that a man is killed every hour in Basra, and in Anbar the assassination were so many, especially of prominent Sunni scholars, consolations were rejected, while the city was under siege for months, and Maliki announced on TV late May, that a big (security operation) is going to take place soon.

In Diyala (east of Baghdad), tens of mutilated bodies found in isolated areas are not news any more.

This week, a passenger bus was stopped by armed men; all the 25 children, old people and students on it were ordered out and were shot one by one. At the passport office in Baghdad, which usually begins receiving people at 9:00 am, long queues gather at 5:00 for three months now, those who arrive at 6:00 are sent back. Huge family exodus is expected by July, when the summer holiday begins.

Families are running away from the killings and threats letters, telling them to leave, or face death, and also from the unbearably bad conditions of daily life(2). It has become a very profitable trade for the passport office employees. They claim that they can not receive more than 30 files a day, making people pay $500 to get a passport. Those who can not afford it, or do not have any where to go decide to stay and face their destiny. Some simply refuse to go "We can not just leave Iraq to the criminals, we have to resist. The only problem is our families", a man who already received two threats said.

So what happened? Is this the beginning of the civil war? If yes, why the so called sectarian killings, which actually began 3 years ago did not succeed in creating civil war then? Why now? Who is behind them? Who are the death squads after all? To begin with, it has become common knowledge, beyond any argument that the Interior Ministry and the Iraqi Army are involved in the death squad, whether the Iraqi ministers or the American authorities, admit it or not (3). There are tons of eye witnesses' testimonies, documents, evidences, films...

The type of killing now connected to the death squads began around early 2005, on the hands of the Iraqi police commandos.
But some important points worth mentioning here: that the first Iraqi interim government was (elected) in January 2005 and was heavily Shiite (Jafari government), that around that time the talk of the Salvador option in Iraq was being heard (4), and that the police commandos were formed, mainly of Shiite militias, especially Badr (the armed branch of the Supreme Council of the Islamic Revolution in Iraq) and the Mahdi Army (the Sadr Movement militia).

But does all this mean that the death squads are Shiite militias within the interior ministry forces? The answer is: NO, not exactly. I know that any Iraqi who has seen a death squads' operation (which is becoming a familiar day light phenomenon) would want to shoot me in the head for this answer; because a convoy of heavily armed men, masked, black-suited, in expensive modern cars and pick ups, calling Sunnis the worst of names, shooting in the air, calling for revenge, attacking individuals, shops, kidnapping people, beating them to death or shoving them in cars trunks, would not look like anything other than a sectarian militia. But this is only part of the story.

Throughout 2005, thousands of young Sunni men were arrested (officially) by the Iraqi police commandos (a major arrests operation in Baghdad was in May 2005, given the name of “Lightning”, when hundreds were arrested). Weeks later, some of their bodies were found in different places of Baghdad, or Iraq, mainly to the east. The names of the Wolf Brigades, the Ra'ad (thunder), the Nimr (Tiger), the Karrar (Imam Ali), the Imam Hussien, the Scorpion; Al-Borkan (volcano)...became familiar names of police commandos brigades (Maghaweer). They are supposed to be counterinsurgency, intelligence based troops. They were created, trained, armed, and directed by the American intelligence officers who are well known for serving in central and South America where death squads were a major part of the political scene (5).

The Maghaweer were so brutal, that one of the prominent Iraqi personalities, who publicly denounce the occupation, told us that the American prisons are more merciful than the Iraqi. Those detainees told stories of the kinds of torture they were exposed to in the Iraqi Interior Ministry prisons. In many

ways, they were similar to the traces seen on the bodies found in the garbage or the sewage daily in Baghdad nowadays, connected to the death squads. Holes drilled in the head, feet, lungs... etc are trade marks (they were well-known in the Iranian prisons). Broken bones, smashed sculls, burnt or pealed skin, savage beatings, electric shocks, pulled out right eye, are
familiar in both cases.

Abu Omar, an Iraqi engineer who spent 4 months of 2005 in Al-Nissoor and Al-Kadimiya notorious prisons, talked about pick ups leaving after midnight and coming back after few hours with tens of men, handcuffed and blindfolded. Abu Omar was one of tens of prisoners who appeared on a famous TV program, produced by the Interior Ministry. Badly tortured, those prisoners admit committing several acts of terrorism, but more important, publicly accusing well known Sunni scholars of immoral acts or of terrorism. Interestingly enough, Abu Omar was released immediately after accusing on TV one of those scholar Sheikhs of using the mosque to hide weapons; although Abu Omar's file was filled with all kinds of fabricated crimes that would execute him a hundred times, according to his judge, who released him. Later, especially after the Shiite coalition won the December 2005 elections, and after the Samarra Shrine explosion, the killings changed dramatically in number and in technique.

The worst were in the last week of February and in March. Thousands of Sunnis were slaughtered by black-suited militias using the police cars and weapons, hundreds of mosques were burnt, thousands men, women and children were kidnapped, mainly in Baghdad suburbs and areas of mixed sectarian communities. Crime gangs, some of them are again connected to the militias, were a big part of the whole chaos. Ali, a young Sunni from Doura was kidnapped in May, the gang asked for $50.000 ransom. Ali was one of the luckiest.

He was released after his family managed to collect and pay $30.000. Ali told us how he was kidnapped, taken in a car trunk, driven for 1.30 hours in rural areas, and beaten. He heard the gang calling some body telling him "we got a Sunni dog", they were talking in a southern slang. It is well known that the Rashid ex-military barracks, the biggest in Iraq before the occupation, are now a shelter for criminal gangs. Mohammad, another young man from al-Madain (south east of Baghdad) was kidnapped and hidden there, he told us stories of kidnapped children and women kept by gangs there. A university student girl was brought one morning, he said. They called her the bitch, because she was not wearing the hijab. She kept on screaming until late in the afternoon that day, when she was finally "silenced".

Other crimes were also connected to these groups, white and children slavery, drugs trade and smuggling, according to Iraqi Human Rights organizations. While some kidnappings and killings are political, criminal or for sectarian revenge, many others were for obscure reasons. Medical doctors, university professors, businessmen, merchants, school teachers were also targeted. Hundreds of them are being assassinated. Some of them were Baathists, but many others were not.

The big question remains why the government is not doing anything about it. Actually, in Amara (south east of Iraq) and in Kut (east of Iraq) some armed men who were caught killing civilians and burning mosques were arrested by some police stations, but the American troops and some political

parties intervened and released them. In Basra there was a big problem between the governor and the Shiite reference in Najaf because he accused the Shiite political parties in the Maliky government of sponsoring the assassinations and corruption (namely oil smuggling). Actually, Al-Fadhila party spokesman (Shiite) accused the prime minister, Maliky, of imposing martial law for political, not security, reasons e.g. to marginalize and control the political forces who oppose the Shiite Coalition government policies and parties. But the important fact here is: that the police commandos were mainly Shiite militias does not imply that they were always committing their brutal crimes for sectarian reasons. Actually, that was why they were used to commit those crimes, simply to instigate sectarian civil war.

It was the American Governor of Iraq, Bremer, who engineered the Shiite militias join the Iraqi security forces, according to article 91 of the Transitional Administrative Law (TAL) put by Bremer himself, to fight the (Sunni insurgency) by Iraqi hands. Death Squads in Iraq are units inside the security forces, whose members are not just religiously fanatic sectarian militias, by foreign intelligence: American, Israeli, Iranian or any other country. They are also Iraqis "educated" and trained outside Iraq, brought into Iraq before the occupation, and shortly after it. Their job is to instigate sectarian conflict leading to create a (federal) Iraq, e.g. a divided Iraq.

It is true that the hands are Iraqis, but the minds and the money are not. It is also true that some political sectarian militias are involved in the death squads, especially those who are connected to the Iranian project in Iraq. But it is interesting to notice how the mainstream media, and the Iraqi government keep on nurturing the idea that the sectarian killings are done by the Sunni insurgency, what they call the rogue units in the police, and the Mahdi Army.

The other militias who are involved in the sectarian killings and violence are set aside. But who are those Iraqis whose job is to instigate a civil war? Why? Many of us remember very well the few hundreds of military men who accompanied Chalabi (head of the National Congress party, well known for being the Pentagon man) into Iraq directly after the occupation. They were highly trained outside Iraq, many say in an isolated island in the Pacific, by American, Israeli, and south African officers. There are reports that some were trained in the Israel, Hungry and Poland.

Early after the occupation, there were few individual assassinations, mainly of Baathists, especially in Adhamiya, where the community still remembers a man called Mohammad Saddam. He was responsible for the arrest and killing of many Iraqi resistance members and advocates. There were some assassinations of Baathists and security individuals in Nassiriya too, where these troops were moved. There was strong reaction against their activities. The press talked then about the American authorities disarming the Chalabi militias.(6) They disappeared for a while.

But all the Iraqi families, whose houses were raided by the American troops, especially in 2003, remember masked men who speak Iraqi, accompanying the American troops in these raids. They were called informers. Maybe some were, but the way they quickly joined the occupation troops was curious. A member of these forces (they were called the Forces of Iraq Freedom) recently sent out a sheet of

facts exposing the rule they were playing in assassinating Shiites and Sunnis to create sectarian problems.

After explaining how they were brain washed and recruited, and trained before (and some after) the occupation, he said that these forces were infiltrated in the New Iraqi Army, the National Guards, the Iraqi police, the Maghaweer (police commandos), the Interior Intelligence and the Iraqi Special Forces. They are actually called the Iraqi Special Forces and their headquarters are in the Baghdad airport. They are not connected to any Iraqi security body, and are supervised by American and Israeli officers.

This man, who promised to expose his identity once the death squad's leadership is arrested, said that they were attacking Sunnis "in uniforms, IDs, and police cars", and they were attacking Shiites "in cars normally used by the Mujahideen". He gave an example of the biggest operation they did which was the Kadhimiya bridge stampede last summer, in which more one thousand were killed.

He gave a list of some members of these forces. Among the 67 names he gave, only 14 were Arabs, the rest were Kurds, mainly from Barzani (president of Kurdistan's party). Two were Jews, and one Iranian.

Nothing in this paper was news to us, may be some of the details, but to come from a member of the death squads talking about the dirty war they are waging in Iraq is very important at this point, when many Iraqis begin to believe that this is a sectarian war.

In some ways it is, and increasingly tribal too, especially after the Samara Shrine explosion, although in fact, there is a wide understanding that it was not the Salafists who did it, simply because Samara was under their control for months until last December, and they did not do it. In fact, the Iranian intelligence, or their Iraqi allies are accused of bombing the Shrine, just to unleash the sectarian violence through retaliatory attacks, which is what is happening the last 4 months.

When will the mainstream media give us this side of the story?

(1) -Dr. Qais said that the Baghdad morgue received 1068 bodies in January 2006, February, March, April (around four months).
He said that more 90% of them were gun shot

(2) -Extremists distribute leaflets in Baghdad streets listing prohibited things: T shirts, shorts (for boys), female drivers, not covering the hair, make up, and jewelry... Girls are being pulled out of the school buses and beaten if they do not put the scarf.
A student of chemistry in the Technological University was shaved bald. School buses drivers are being beaten or threatened if they allow (such) girls in the bus.

(3)-the Prime Minister, the Minister of Interior and the Vice president admitted publicly that some police troops were involved in the death squads.

(4)- Shortly before that, there are at least 2 cases (that we personally know about) of American soldiers in uniform killing Iraqis in an unfamiliar way, not shooting or bombing ...etc. They were slaughtering the victims by bayonets, or shooting them in the mouth.

(5)- It is also important to mention that some of the Maghaweer brigades were actually formed late in 2004. For detailed information on this point see: Max Fuller, For Iraq, the Salvador Option Become Reality, Center for Research on Globalization.
See:
http://www.globalresearch.ca/index.php?context=viewArticle&code=FUL20051110&articleId=1230

(6) It would be interesting to notice that Chalabi – and Allawi too- were curiously very quiet lately, almost silent, in the last 5 months when the big problem of the Interior and defense ministries was negotiated among the new Iraqi political players.

http://www.brusselstribunal.org/ArticlesIraq3.htm

Press Release 17th June 2006

Talafar Hospital Equipments smashed by angry armed gunmen

Doctors for Iraq has received reports that armed gunmen entered Talafar Hospital in the West North of Iraq and threatened and attacked staff and patients waiting to be treated inside the hospital.

Doctors and medical staff reported that on May 9tth 2006 there was an explosion in Talafar that caused many casualties and injuries to civilians who were brought into the hospital emergency room for treatment. Medical staff say that many of the injured were women and children who had sustained horrific injuries in the explosion. The twenty six doctors and medical staff working in the hospital rushed to treat the wounded and injured.



Doctors and medical staff report that a group of armed gunmen all carrying weapons that are usually associated with the Iraqi police (glock pistol and AK rifles) entered the hospital in an aggressive and threatening manner. One doctor described how one of the armed men put a gun to his head demanding that he stop treating a wounded child and instead attend to a man with a minor shell wound in his leg that the doctor had treated earlier.

The medic described how he was called a terrorist by the armed man and was forced to stop treating the wounded child. Doctors For Iraq has received disturbing reports from staff in the hospital saying the armed group started vandalizing and breaking hospital equipment and then attacked an ambulance driver breaking his arm with a riffle butt that one of the men was carrying. Another ambulance driver was punched in the face and the hospital pharmacist was attacked by three armed men who took turns in hitting and kicking him.

One of the armed men fired bullets above a doctor's head missing him narrowly and causing fear and hysteria in the hospital.



The armed men went in to the doctor's staff room stealing money, mobile phones and damaging the hospital premises. Doctors report that some of the men were encouraging one another to break everything inside the hospital and continued to call the medical staff terrorists.

Doctors for Iraq is deeply concerned about the attack on medical staff and the hospital in Talafar. Doctors, medical staff and patients have the right to work and be treated in hospitals free of violence and intimidation. This latest incident in Talafar is just one in a long list of reports that Doctors For Iraq has received from doctors across Iraq illustrating how dangerous it has become for doctors to carry out their work in the country.

Doctors for Iraq is calling on the Iraqi government and Ministry of Health to offer greater protection to doctors, medical staff and patients inside hospitals and for an investigation to be launched into who carried out this attack on doctors and the hospital in Talafar.

For more information please contact:
Press.officer@doctorsforiraq.org
www.doctorsforiraq.org - http://www.brusselstribunal.org/ArticlesIraq3.htm



Death Squads and Iraqi police: two sides of the same coin.

Dirk Adriaensens (B*Russell*s Tribunal) and Isam Rasheed (Baghdad) 03 March 2006

"Faik Bakir, the director of the Baghdad morgue, has fled Iraq in fear of his life after reporting that more than 7,000 people have been killed by death squads in recent months, the outgoing head of the UN human rights office in Iraq has disclosed."
(...)"Mr Pace [UN official] *said records, supported by photographs, came from Baghdad's forensic institute, which passed them to the UN. The Baghdad morgue has been receiving 700 or more bodies a month. The figures peaked at 1,100 last July - many showing signs of torture."*
(...) "Some militias are integrated with the police and wear police uniforms," he said. "The Badr brigade [Sciri's armed wing] are in the police and are mainly the ones doing the killing. They're the most notorious." Jonathan Steele www.guardian.co.uk/Iraq/Story/0,,1721366,00.html

The B*Russell*s Tribunal recently received evidence of 2 such cases, where the Iraqi police was clearly involved in "Death Squad" activities. Acting under the protection of the Ministry of Interior and the Industry Ministry, they are unscrupulous torturers and killers. We had doubts about publishing the story, because the pictures are very disturbing. But keeping Robert Fisks' words in mind: "*if the mainstream media would publish photos of the real war, as I've seen it, nobody would support this war*", we decide to make these cases public.









1- His name was **Khalid Waleed Ahmed**. He was Sunni,36 years old, married and having three kids, the youngest one was only 4 months years old. He was an engineer, working for a private company, and he lived in the Ur area in Baghdad.

Thursday 23 February 2006 at 6:00 pm when he was having dinner, his house was raided by several men dressed in black. They came with many cars, and some of these cars were from the Iraqi police (as his brother said). They arrested him and also broke all the doors of his house. After three days they found him in the morgue in Baghdad.





2- His name was **Wa'ad Jajim Mohammed**, Sunni, 46 years old, married and having three kids. He lived in the Cairo area in Baghdad. he got arrested on Saturday 25 February 2006 in his house at 4:45 am. His family found his dead body in the morgue after two days.

Militants of Jafaari commit massacre in Al-Fursan village. US sponsored death squads in action.

2006March 23(Dirk Adriaensens ,Haythem Khatab

Appeal For Help - Sectarian Cleansing and Coercive Displacement

Voice of Freedom for Human Rights



Undeclared sectarian war and bloodshed are still underway in Iraq, regardless of non-stop calls to put an end to them, which are warning against being dragged into civil war, which will definitely end up with casualties from all parties involved.
Below are the details of this ongoing war:

On March 2, 2006, an envoy of the Voice of Freedom for Human Rights and the Red Crescent visited Al-Fursan Village, located near An-Nahrawan in Madaen. It comprises of 60 brick and mud houses, inhabited by more than 60 Sunni families. The village is surrounded by a number of predominantly Shiite villages, decorated with black and red flags.

on February 27, 2006, Al-Fursan village was attacked by hordes of men in black, who were driving cars of the ministry of interior and state-backed militias. A large number of the villagers fled their homes. Eight people, including the Imam of the village mosque, whose name is Abu Aisha, and a ten year-old boy called Adnan Midab, were executed. Please find the attached photograph of the room in which Adnan was hiding and was later killed. A number of dead animals (sheep, cows and dogs) were also shot at by the attackers.

The village mosque was sabotaged and burned down like almost all the houses in the village. When the relief workers and VOF envoy were in the village, four men, who were hiding outside the village came back stealthily to recount the details of the attack. They stated that the perpetrators used machinegun, Kalashnikov, explosives and fuel to carry out the attacks. Given the fact that the villagers thought that it was the security forces, they did not take any precautionary measures to protect themselves.



The aforementioned men, who were hiding outside the village showed us where the dead bodies of men, women and a child were buried.

We saw the room, where ten-year old Adnan Midab was shot dead. We also saw the burned down cars of the villagers.
Young men stated that they have been repeatedly harassed in order to force them into leaving their village. After this attack, all the remaining families left to other places in Dyala and Baghdad.

We have taken photographs of a large number of places in the village. There is a number of isolated predominantly Sunni villages (Al-Batta, Al-Mujamma', etc, whose people were harassed by men of the ministry of interior and militias, backed by foreigners. The latter villages are attacked on a regular basis, but it was impossible for our staff to get into them, due to security restrictions.

The above is but the tip of the iceberg. These practices are organized and carried out on a regular basis within towns, rural villages and suburbs. Civilians are asking for international forces to protect them.
It is worth noting that the authorities are turning a blind eye on the perpetrators and terrorists who have been carrying out these attacks. Failure to protect the civilians will only make things worse.

Initial Statistics

The coercive displacement practiced by the ministry of interior, the state-backed militias and foreigners against the people of Nahrawan is on the increase. The number of the Sunni families who have fled their homes is as follows:

Al-Jboor Village, 50 families
Jabir Hummadi Village, 60 families
Shakha Village No. 5, 12 families
Shakha Village No. 7, 30 families
Al-Khalisa Village, 50 families
Al-Fursan Village, 60 families
Jasim Ibrahim Al-Battawi Village, 33 families
Bani Zed Village, 100 families
Al-Mujamma' Village, 100 families



The tragedy is mounting. People are deprived of basic needs. The aid workers are helpless.

The UN and humanitarian NGOs must act and do the following:

a) - Send a Fact Finding Committee of the UN, the Arab League or International Organizations.

b) - Send Peacemaking forces to protect the civilians and put an end to genocides, sectarian cleansing and coercive displacement.

c) - Control the east borders of Iraq to stop the acts of terrorism perpetrated by foreigners, who have been pouring to Iraq through the Iranian borders and raid and search the villages harbouring them.

d) - Launch a relief program by neutral trusted parties.

Additional comment from Dirk Adriaensens:

The UN Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI), Human Rights Report, 1 January– 28 February 2006, states: *"Serious allegations have been received by UNAMI Human Rights Office regarding the actions of some segments of the security forces, in particular the police and special forces, and their apparent collusion with militias in carrying out human rights violations. Allegations that "death squads" operate in the country grew stronger following the discovery by the Multi-National Forces in Iraq (MNF-I) and the Iraqi Security Forces of a suspicious group, acting within the structures of the Ministry of Interior. This re-affirms the urgent need for the Government to assert control over the security forces and all armed groups. Throughout the reporting period, insurgent activities, including terrorist acts, intensified after 22 February and continue to affect the civilian population."*

Should the devastating role of the US in this sectarian violence not be thoroughly questioned? The MNF-I and Iraqi forces "*discovered*" the existence of at least one possible death squad within the Ministry of Interior, the UNAMI report states.

But if you look at the plans the US themselves have drawn for Iraq, why should they "*uncover*" something they have created themselves?

According to an article recently published in New York Times Magazine, in September 2004 Counsellor to the US Ambassador for Iraqi Security Forces James Steele was assigned to work with a new elite Iraqi counter-insurgency unit known as the Special Police Commandos, formed under the operational control of Iraq's Interior Ministry ('The Way of the Commandos', Peter Maass, http://psychoanalystsopposewar.org/resources_files/TheWay_of_the_Commandos.html).

From 1984 to 1986 then Col. Steele had led the US Military Advisory Group in El Salvador, where he was responsible for developing special operating forces at brigade level during the height of the conflict. These forces, composed of the most brutal soldiers available, replicated the kind of small-unit operations with which Steele was familiar from his service in Vietnam. Rather than focusing on seizing terrain, their role was to attack

'insurgent' leadership, their supporters, sources of supply and base camps. In the case of the 4th Brigade, such tactics ensured that a 20-man force was able to account for 60% of the total casualties inflicted by the unit (Manwaring, El Salvador at War, 1988, p 306-8). http://globalresearch.ca/articles/FUL506A.html.

Isn't it time that the politicians in Washington stop their hypocritical double talk and answer to the question what exactly James Steele and other US military personnel have done to incite a civil war in Iraq?

"part of a secret $3 billion in new funds—tucked away in the $87 billion Iraq appropriation that Congress approved in early November—will go toward the creation of a paramilitary unit manned by militiamen associated with former Iraqi exile groups. Experts say it could lead to a wave of extrajudicial killings, not only of armed rebels but of nationalists, other opponents of the U.S. occupation and thousands of civilian Baathists—up to 120,000 of the estimated 2.5 million former Baath Party members in Iraq. (...) The hidden $3 billion will fund covert ("black") operations disguised as an Air Force classified program. According to John Pike, an expert on classified military budgets at www.globalsecurity.org, the cash, spread over three years, is likely being funneled directly to the CIA, boosting that agency's estimated $4 billion a year budget by fully 25 percent. Operations in Iraq will get the bulk of it, with some money going to Afghanistan. The number of CIA officers in Iraq, now 275, will increase significantly, supplemented by large numbers of the U.S. military's elite counterinsurgency forces." http://www.prospect.org/print/V15/1/dreyfuss-r.html. *01 January 2004.*

What we witness now is the result of that US policy of creating, training and funding militia's and death squads. Why doesn't the UNAMI report tell us the truth in their report? Why don't they do their job properly? And why does the mainstream press keeps on repeating His Master's Voice, when they know that the Bush Administration is solely responsible for the atrocious state the Iraqis find themselves in.

Inside Iraq's secret prisons: an Iraqi testimony.

19-12-2005 (s TribunalRussellB)Salam Al Jubouri

The White House seemed very upset with what happened in the Green zone, when US soldiers "found" the jail of Jadriya while they were looking for a 15 years old kidnapped child. The images of torture and execution disturbed the US government, who now claims to be the champion of human rights and democracy. Even Condolencia Rice proclaimed that "the US does not torture". They pretended that the Jafaari government had let them down with such abuses. How hypocrite can you get? They trained these men, spent 3,3 billion $ out of the 2004 Pentagon's 87 billion $ budget to create and fund militia's like the Badr militia's and the Wolf brigade. They don't fool no Iraqis, even when they hire people like Christian Bailey to plant false stories in Iraqi newspapers. We Iraqis know what's happening. The US bears prime responsibility for the torture and killing of Iraqi civilians. They transferred their dirty methods used in Nicaragua, El Salvador, Honduras and Guatemala to Iraq. And they kill without remorse, using their militia's to carry out the torture for them. They must be very desperate. On the one hand they want to invade Iran, on the other hand they fund and train Iranian militia's, and support Iranian fundamentalist currents. But when they decide to invade Iran, every single Shia in Iraq will join the resistance. And they will be as ruthless against US forces as they are

now against the Iraqi resistance. How can the US ever get out of this quagmire? A good advice: the sooner they leave, the better for them

My story is about those jails far away from the Green Zone, near to the Iranian zone. Who feels the pain of the prisoners under the whips of the Iranian investigators in Medain, Kut, Baladiyat, and Hilla ? And what is the role of the UN as independent international organization in Iraq, when "investigators" in Iranian jails in Iraq shoot people down without reason, and the UN is looking the other way

My friend Majed Hadi al-jubourie, 27 years old, was arrested in October 2005 by Al Rafidain forces, with the support of US troops, and he and his 3 brothers and 55 years old uncle were taken to the Al-Rafidain forces headquarters in Baladiyat, south east of Baghdad near to the formal Security building

"From the first moment when we were arrested, I felt that those soldiers who arrested us were not Iraqis, I mean they were really very close with Iranians, that was clear through their accents, and through the sayings and the singing that are typical for the Badr forces and the dead Hakim", Majed said

Majed thought that he and his brothers would be executed, because incidents of arrests by the police, who execute people before throwing their bodies in isolated areas, is a common practice these days in Iraq.

"They blindfolded us, handcuffed us and put us in an American van without windows, to the Al-Rafidain forces camp, then they put us in a cell and started their investigation which consisted only of beatings. They did not ask us a specific question, they did not know why we were there, all they knew was that 'we are Sunni's and we are men'", Majed said angrily. "They used sticks and pipes to hit us, every night. We were trying to cover my uncle because he is sick and older than us. We thought that he might die under these severe beatings"

Majed considered himself lucky at that time, as he was hearing the sounds of torture in investigations rooms and solitary rooms, he was hearing the shouting of the prisoners, and he saw them after the investigation: half dead. They brought them with blankets as they were not able to walk

"They were torturing people from the Dora district. They were so savage with them, so brutal. They were torturing them many times a day. One day they were torturing us after dinner, and they decided to put us with them in the same cell. We were forty people, squeezed in a tiny cell. These were the most difficult days. I thought that I would die. They broke my bones, they tortured me and everyone in that cell, to force us to confess that we killed policemen, and tried to make us confess in front of a camera to show us on Al-Iraqia tv"

"They ordered my brother Hamed to carry dead bodies from people tortured to death. They choose him because he was big and strong. I thought that they would kill him later on as he saw a lot of their crimes "

Hamed is still afraid of the horrors he witnessed. He asked me not to mention anything that would reveal his identity, and he decided not to stay at home after that horrible experience

"They were killing people as if they were killing flies. They were not afraid of anything. It was apparently very easy for them to kill anyone. I carried many bodies which were covered with blood and filled with holes of drilling devices, and some of those bodies were shot. They gave me this job for one reason: they did not want their uniform to be covered with blood. We were putting the bodies in ambulances, and then they would take them away. I think they were thrown into rivers or in deserted areas"

Hamed told me: "the ground was covered with blood, all red. They used everything to torture people. Making holes in heads seems to be very easy for them, as they were trained to do that. They do a dirty duty and follow orders from superiors"

Majed told me about someone's horrible painful story inside the jail. This story is a good example of how terrible and inhuman the people are that were in charge of the jail. "They took someone for investigation and we were hearing him shouting during the torture. They were telling him to confess what he did. He was saying that he did nothing, then they shot in his leg with a pistol, then brought him back into the cell. He was bleeding a lot, because there was a hole in his leg. We treated him with a rag and we asked the guards to take him to hospital, but they refused, they said: 'you Sunni's deserve this, you are Saddam's people'. The man was dying and no one could help, they kept him for more than a week until there was a bad smell coming from his leg, we all were smelling. The place was incredibly dirty with urine and human excrements. I still feel the smell coming from that man's leg. It was like he was rotting. He remained there when we were released. He asked us to inform his family in case he would die, and said: "pray for me. I want to die, because I can't stand the pain anymore"

Majed said: "if you get out of that jail you feel a desire to join Zarqawi's people to fight against the Shia and Americans, and you believe what Zarqawi says, if he exists. Those militia men were hanging Hakim's picture everywhere in the jail and tortured us continuously. I hate that picture now. I hate their black hats and their dirty beards. They are a shame for Islam. They are not Muslims"

Majed said that some Shiite religious men were mediating between the prison officers and the prisoners families. Their families had to pay something like $3000 to release a person, sometimes more, depending on the financial situation of the prisoners families

This is now happening in Iraq, to my friends and family, on a daily basis, while you Americans are buying Christmas presents and preparing Turkey. Every Iraqi has a similar story to tell. We never had sectarian violence before, but Bremer and Bush are successfully heading for a catastrophe when they remain in Iraq. And I'll tell you why. Let the occupation troops leave and the equilibrium will be restored. Now people can kill without impunity, because they feel protected by the occupation forces. They are pushed into a sectarian corner by every law that has been issued by Bremer and the TAL. But if the troops leave and one Iraqi kills another Iraqi, he's certain that there will be revenge. Remember that this is a tribal society, and if one member of the tribe gets killed, the other members of the tribe have the obligation to revenge this killing. Everyone in Iraq knows this, and they will think twice

before committing atrocities as they are doing now, with the help of US tax money and protected by Bremer's laws and US occupation forces. I hope you understand by now that there is only one way to solve this conflict before it really escalates: bring your troops home before my people kicks them out. With every new prisoner, every new civilian killed by your airplanes and Apache helicopters, ten new people will join the popular resistance

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Al-Islah: Another Crime Committed to the Knowledge and Support of the Occupiers and the Iraqi Government

Sabah Ali *(27 August 2006)*

On Sunday 20.08.06, at 7 am, 500 heavily armed militia men dressed in the national guards and the Iraqi police uniforms, and using their vehicles attacked the village of Al-Islah, a village of about 5000 inhabitants of both communities: Sunnies and Shiites on the high way Baghdad-Baquba (east). They landed on the high way to Diyala province opposite to Al-Islah village.

These militias began shooting on the civilians from 7 to 1 pm; killing tens of people (according to Alsharqiya, an Iraqi satellite TV) (http://www.alsharqiya.com/display.asp?fname=news\2006\08\962.txt&storytitle=), burning the Rashidi mosque after steeling its furniture, and obliging the Sunni families to leave the village immediately. The American troops arrived later to stop the shooting. The only thing they did is they arrested 10 of the mosques guards, confiscated the weapons which the families in the neighborhood use to defend themselves, and left at 5 pm.

One hour after they left, at 6 pm, the community prominent people went to the nearest Sadr Movement office in Boob Al-Sham, an area close to Al- Islah, to meet the responsible of that office, whose name is Sayed Alaa'. He told the community delegation that he had two conditions to stop the attack: That the Sadr militias pass on the highway safely to go to Fahhama area (close to the village) and to consider the area from Boob Al-Sham to the Tigris river a (pure) Shiite area and that all the Sunni families have to be evacuated from it. Naturally the community delegation rejected his conditions.

The Sadr militias resumed the attack the next day; they burnt of Sunni families' houses in Boob Al-Sham, obliging 120 families to leave the areas.

In spite of all the efforts that the community did to contact the occupying forces, and the Iraqi officials, Mr. Shirwan Al-Wa'ily, the National Security Minister, is one of them, and many other political forces, but none gave the issue the attention it deserved. All that the government did, after the killing and evacuating was done, was that they sent troops saying that they would stay in the area for only 10 days , then the inhabitants have to handle it on their on.

The implicit complicity is very clear. The Iraqi and the American troops are encouraging and helping the sectarian militias in achieving their agenda. The Islah crimes are only one of many other

genocide. The worst of things is the government is talking about national reconciliation!!! No comment or reaction has come from the American or the Iraqi authorities on this "incident".

http://www.brusselstribunal.org/ArticlesIraq3.htm

On the American steps - Corruption and Militias Twins turn Iraq in a "free fraud zone"

Sabah Ali *(10 Sept. 2006)*

On May 2, 2006 evening, two floors in the *Ministry Of Oil* huge building were caught on fire, eating away two very important departments: the archives and the computers floors where all the records, documents, accounts books, and contracts...are kept. There were no employees in the building except for the guards and the Facilities Protection Services. (1)

Two days before this "incident", the general inspector in Iraq had issued the *Smuggling Crude Oil and Oil Products*: *Second Transparency Report* in which he exposed in details the catastrophic numbers and facts about corruption in the oil sector in Iraq : smuggling, theft, fraud, black market leading to great loss in money and resources. On his side the former *Minster of Oil*, Ibrahim Bahr Al-Oloom, said that Iraq lost at least 4 billion dollars of smuggled oil last year, referring to the involvement of the government's high officials in the smuggling and corruption scandals. Many political analyses considered the fire an attempt to conceal the corruption evidences.

The fire took place few days before the new Iraq government took office, after 6 months of delay due to conflicts on governmental offices among the Shiite winning parties within the *United Iraqi Alliance*. The *Ministry of Oil* was one of the disputed ministries, especially between the *Supreme Council of the Islamic Revolution in Iraq* and *Al-Fadhila* party (both in the *Alliance*). Any one who is familiar with the "new" Iraqi politics knows that the first thing each Iraqi government does, is to expose the previous government corruption scandals. Finally, the *Ministry of Oil*, and the *Ministry of Finance*, were given to two persons well known for being the closest to Iran among the Shiite *Alliance*. 2

Another "accident" : in Zafaraniya, a poor district south of Baghdad, of Shiite and Sunni mixture, a huge explosion killed and injured more than 250 civilians on Sunday evening August12. The Iraqi *Ministry of Interior* said that it was a car bomb; the American sources and witnesses said it was not; actually it was a gas explosion which caused many other explosions.

Few days later, newspapers in Baghdad were talking about a corrupt deal where the *Ministry of Oil* imported cooking gas from Iran. Bad deals, imported oil products which do not fulfill the same qualities mentioned in the purchase contracts, were one of the big corruption problems mentioned in

the *Second Transparency Report*. The question is why the Ministry of Interior would try to cover the Oil corruption.

Another big and scandalous problem of controlling the oil production is the Ministry's failure of reinstall equipments to meter oil production, after they were stopped since the beginning of 2005. There is no way to know how much oil is officially exported, according to the UN International Advisory and Monitoring Board report published last August. The report said that $241m of oil money were put in unrecognized ministries' accounts, and that $221m were put in unrecognized accounts of the State Oil Marketing Organization (SOMO) whose director is well known to be the previous oil Minster's closest friend.

These are just few of many recent examples which clearly indicate that the government, or members in it, is involved in the corruption scandals directly and through its connection to the armed militias, namely *Al-Mahdi* army (of the *Sadr Movement*) and the *Badr* militias (of the *Supreme Council of the Islamic Revolution in Iraq-SCIRI*) -both heavily and effectively represented in the Iraqi government now. These militias are controlling the corrupt oil production and marketing (*Ministry of Oil*) and controlling the security -or rather insecurity- in Iraq (*Interior and Defense*).

A parliament member said lately that the political militias are actually stronger than the government now, and an adviser in the Prime Minister office described some of the Iraqi security forces as terrorist militias paid by the government, not to mention the handsome bribes, according to the advisor. He said that many high officials who criticize corruption are corrupt themselves and are closely connected to the sectarian militias. To prove this, he said, 15 Iraqi judges were assassinated especially those who secretly work with the *Commission of Public Integrity* in Iraq. In Basra, however, those militias control the oil smuggling, with complete Iranian help and protection (together with drugs and weapons poured by the Iranians in all of the southern Iraqi regions).

In its statement on Sept 10, 2006, the *Commission* said that the number of Iraqi high officials who are involved in financial corruption cases has reached 73 (yes seventy three!), 15 of them are ministers, the rest are deputy ministers, general directors, Parliament members and parties leaders. All are granted legal immunity.

The *Commission* which is directly connected to the presidency council announced that it has 1852 corruption cases involving billions of dollars, and it is trying to change its law, obviously to have more power in the high officials' cases. The irony is that in mid 2004, a UN audit committee working on the first 6 months of 2004 found that $6 b of the *Development Fund in Iraq* were unaccounted for, about $2 b of them are connected to Talabani, the Iraqi president now!

The *Commission* head, Radhi Hamza al-Radhi repeats privately and publicly that there are many government pressures on him "to slow down and take it easy", and that he is facing many obstacles. *The Ministry of Interior*, for example, did not respond to the Commission's 164 arrests orders against prominent officials accused of corruption, and 100 investigation order concerning administrative and financial corruption inside the *Interior Ministry* itself.

The *Commission* speaker said that there are at least 234 corruption cases in this ministry waiting to be looked in by the judicial committee. Among the officials who are called to reply to the *Commission*'s inquiries are the Iraqi former prime ministers: Allawi and Al-Jafari, on cases of stealing money, accepting kickbacks and assigning millions of dollars to phantom rebuilding contracts that appeared only on paper. Another corrupt official, who is already in jail now, is the High Commissioner of the Elections, Adil Allami, on charges of fraud and bribes in millions.

In its latest report, *Measuring Stability and Security in Iraq -August 2006* the American Ministry of Defense, Pentagon, said that "Many of Iraq's political factions tend to view government ministries and their associated budgets as sources of power, patronage and funding for their parties. Ministers with out strong party ties...some times have little control over the politically appointed or connected people serving under them".

The corruption problem is directly connected to what is called the sectarian violence problem. It would be useful to notice that through 2005-2006, both twin problems were openly escalating together. Every "last month" was the deadliest month in Iraq, while *Transparency International* sited Iraq on the top of corruption list. Eye witnesses of the sectarian militias' raids in different parts of Iraq, especially in Baghdad suburbs, talk about expensive modern cars and weapons (including grenade launchers and heavy machine guns, apart from light weapons) and hundreds of young men in each raid. There is no declared number for the militias of course, but it is safe to say that they are hundreds of thousands each. These people are well known to be beautifully paid.

The American official reports insist on saying that terrorism is the main problem in the oil sector in Iraq, that the terrorists' attacks on pipelines are the main obstacle to normal oil industry in Iraq, implying that the resistance is responsible of depriving the Iraqi people of 95% of its national income. The Americans also attribute the reconstruction program failure to what they call terrorism.

The Iraqi General Inspector, Dr. Ali Al-Allaq, however, puts targeting oil pipelines as the fifth problem after 4 more dangerous problems (large discrepancy in oil product prices between Iraq and the neighboring countries, inadequate control and supervision of movement and trading oil products, lax judiciary measures against offenders and lawbreakers, and greater reliance on the imported oil products...).

Each of these problems is a big story in itself –detailed in the General Inspector's *Second Transparency Report*, available in English and Arabic - but targeting pipelines is of special interest. Well informed sources in the *Ministry of Oil* and eye witnesses say that an exploded pipe would create a lake of crude oil. The *Ministry* sells these lakes very cheep to certain individuals who in turn sell them to customers outside Iraq.

These individuals are usually high officials in the government or the political parties who control it, and the customers are usually Iranians. Other eye witnesses in Basra say that there are pipelines which go from Iraq directly into Iran, and that there are tens of illegal outlets of exported Iraqi crude oil which is loaded in ships holding the Iranian flag. Everything in all these cases takes place under the protection of the Shiite militias, especially Badr. Last year the amount of smuggled oil through illegal outlets was the equivalent of one billion dollars, according to Dr. Ali.

The Shiite-Shiite (*SCIRI, Fadhila and Sadr*) conflict in Basra this summer is a flagrant evidence of the connection between corruption and the sectarian militias. To begin with, the Shiite political parties, whose militias are controlling the oil smuggling, do not consider stealing the Iraq oil revenue a crime. On the contrary they consider the southern oil fields their natural right given to them by God, and that the central Sunni governments of Iraq has deprived them of this right for ages. Actually this is what the Shiite Federal region of the south is all about.

But each of these parties wants to control the oil industry to guarantee power through wealth to fund their militias, which means that the fighting will go on as far as these militias are not controlled by any central power. So far the Maliki government and the occupation forces proved to be helpless in dealing with them, assuming that they want to.

Oil black market inside Iraq is well known for being controlled by the Sadr militias. Moqtada Al-Sadr, the Sadr Movement leader, himself is said to "order" his militias to move away from the oil black market after too many scandals were exposed. Again many eyewitnesses talk about big tankers protected by armed men secretly load oil from the warehouses or the fuel stations. One of the British generals in Basra said on a documentary, months ago, that they witness oil smuggled daily but the British troops do not want to do anything about it because "we don't want to be rained by bombs the next day".

Ironically, after fuel reached higher prices 374 percent in July than the previous month**,** thanks to the black market, the only solution that the Minister of Oil, Shehristani could come out with to fight corruption and smuggling, is to privatize the oil products trade, a procedure that leaves the doors wide open for the political mafias and for the powerful militias leaders to steal the market "legally", and of course all the contracts will go to Iran, which is what is already happening now.

Administrative and financial corruption as a wide, open phenomenon is new in Iraq. The Iraqi state never knew such phenomenon before the occupation. Of course there were individual cases, as every where in the world, but few officials would dare to mess with the public money. It is part of Iraq's social and political culture to consider wrong doing in the public property as the worst of crimes that damage personal integrity. It is not a defense of Saddam Hussein, but all Iraqis know that a corrupt official would be dealt with very cruelly as personal offence and betrayal against the president himself.

Corruption in this sense, like many other political fatal diseases, came to Iraq with the occupation. There is and endless list of the American authorities' theft and fraud scandals; probably the biggest of them was the story of the 9 billion dollars which "disappeared" when the American governor of Iraq, Paul Bremer left the country. The Americans inherited more than $30 billion of frozen and oil-for-food assets when they invaded Iraq in 2003, to say nothing of $26 million worth of Iraqi property sequestered by the occupation authorities.

These fortunes were supposed to be spent on rebuilding through the *Development Fund in Iraq*. The money disappeared but the country remained in ruins. Many fraud stories are coming out and published now and then in the American mainstream media, talking about billions of Iraqi "reconstruction" money which were misused, stolen, lost, or unaccounted for. Billions dollars of Iraqi money were misused by Bremer, who issued 100 catastrophic economic decisions. 80% of big contracts were given to the American corrupt companies; only 2% were given to the Iraqis.

Millions were handed directly to officials in certain ministries, not through the *Ministry of Finance* or the *Iraqi Central Bank*. One example: last June the *Commission* was investigating kickbacks of $300 million in purchase of "defective and outdated helicopters, machine guns and armored personnel carriers" by a former procurement chief in the Defense Ministry. Another senior defense official was convicted for receiving $400.000 in bribes...etc.

The American officials describe the Iraqis as a corrupt and lawless society. Any Iraqi whose house was raided by the American troops tells a story of how the soldiers stole money, jewelry, personal weapons and any expensive thing, a part from documents. A lawyer in Al-Qaim handed the American troops 300 files of such cases documents (theft during raid) in 2005. When he went back to the American base asking about the cases, he found that the stolen things and the documents had disappeared.

In 2003 and 2004, Iraqis were wondering why many of the thieves and criminals who were sentenced to jail by Iraqi judges were released by the Americans. I personally was a witness of a case in which a car thief was released by an American raid on the police station in which he was kept; three days after the Iraqi judge put him in jail in Dora, south of Baghdad. One of the well known oil smugglers was arrested in April 2006 in the north-western desert, but an American military

commander is demanding his release now. Account books, receipts, financial documents and any evidence of financial operations before the Iraqis were "handed" authority, were destroyed or disappeared instead of being handed to the *Ministry of Finance*.

The Bush Administration refuses to prosecute US firms accused of corruption, a refusal which is turning Iraq into a "free fraud zone" according to a senior official in the occupation authorities in Iraq. If the Americans are going away with their crimes, why not the Iraqis, after

the Iraqi officials now were educated and trained in the US.

1- Sadr's four ministries control 70,000 uniformed, armed men who are part of the Facilities Protection Service, according to the Interior Ministry. U.S. military commanders acknowledge that the agency has mushroomed to more than 140,000. A top former U.S. military commander has said militia fighters under the Facilities Protection Service are tied to kidnappings, execution-style killings and other crimes.

2- One of the sad jokes about corruption says that the food expenses of the protection personnel for the Minister of Finance, Bayan Jabr Solagh, alone are 40.000 dollars a month. Another says that the Minister of Oil, Shehristani, used to be paid $25000 a month when he was a vice president of the National Assembly, and that this money was NOT his salary, but an allowance. He also put his hand on one of Saddam's palaces, and was given $100.000 to repair it and $50.000 to furnish it. He bought himself 3 armored cars for $300.000 each, and got 50 armed men to protect him. This information was sent in a letter to "his Excellency" the grand Ayatollah Sistani to do some thing about it. So far "his Excellency" did not.

3- For more information ,see:

**Smuggling Crude Oil and Oil products: Second Transparency Report*

* Commission of National Integrity in Iraq' statements

**A Switching in Time: a New Strategy for America in Iraq*. Sabban Center

*SIGIR. Statement of Stuart W. Bowen, Jr.

** "So, Mr. Bremer, where did all the money go"*. Guardian, July7, 2006, or London Review of Books, Vol.27 No.13 dated July 7 2005.

**Iran, its neighbors and the regional crisis*. Chatham House

* Development Fund for Iraq, Summery of Audit results. August 2006

**Measuring Stability and Security in Iraq*. Pentagon. August 2006

- www.iraq-amsi.com. www.alsharqiya.com . www.azzaman.com . www.kitabat.org . www.albasrah.net. Among others.

http://www.brusselstribunal.org/ArticlesIraq3.htm

Federalism, Sectarian War and the American Strategy in Iraq

Sabah Ali *(18 October 2006)*

"Everything says we are facing a very difficult time in the next few months, violence is surrounding us from all sides. Movement on the high ways to and from Baghdad is becoming extremely dangerous, and of course inside Baghdad. People disappear, get kidnapped or killed on the highways. Death squads and criminal gangs control them; only the resistance is protecting the individuals and the communities... The government is part of the killing sides (...) The streets are full of people with strange accent(...) I hear a big explosion now(...)They began artillery bombing of different parts of Baghdad, between districts of different sectarian groups (...) An eye witness from Ghazaliya said that the American troops start the bombing, and then an Iraqi doer continues. The political players are using their militias on both sides. It is very important to notice that the resistance is never mentioned within the sectarian classifications"

These lines are written today by a well informed friend who lives in Baghdad now.

The situation in Iraq is out of control. The number of civilians savagely killed, mainly in Baghdad, is approaching 2 hundreds every day. Official Iraqi reports say that around half a million families are internally displaced, a number much less than other Iraqi sources say. According to UN an average one thousand Iraqis are forced into homelessness everyday, in spite of (or is it because of!) the 4 month Iraqi-American security plan in Baghdad.

Needless to say, nothing is done about all these catastrophes; obviously it is an American strategy of attrition against the resistance, some of the militias, and Maliki's government too. Names, addresses and operation rooms of the militias and death squads are well known and talked about publicly (maps are published on the internet) but the security and the occupation troops just ignore them in obvious collusion.

For the fourth day today, fighting is continuing in Balad and Dhuluiya, 80 Kms north of Baghdad, where there is one of the biggest American military bases, militias in uniform are slaughtering Sunnis, forcing families to leave within 2 hours, while the American forces were standing by, according to one Iraqi officer. On Monday, the Balad hospital alone received 80 bodies. Iraqi towns north of Baghdad are under siege for months, while armed men in uniform and in security cars raid them, kill or kidnap their citizens. We have to admit that the CIA death squad experts did a good job.

6.1 million Iraqis left to live in the neighboring countries especially Jordan and Syria or in other places. Iraqi hospitals and universities lost 80% of their scientific and professional cadres. Journalists,

writers, intellectuals, judges, businessmen, religious , tribal and political personalities and others who are counted on to rebuild the country either left , kidnapped, or assassinated, e.g. silenced one way or another.

The American officials are even suggesting scenarios to Maliki's replacement. Political parties in the government are involved in the death squads and sectarian militias' atrocities against civilians, a fact confirmed by the Iraqi people and officials, Al-Maliki himself (many times), and by the Interior Minister. Meanwhile, the American and the Iraqi security forces are continuing their raids, killings, and mass arrests against certain areas in Baghdad, its suburbs, Diyala, Anbar, Musol and Salah Addeen.

The American media is admitting now that the resistance, what they call insurgency in the best, or terrorism usually, is the highest and most effective since the invasion. 58 American soldiers are killed in the first two weeks of October. American official (untrue) numbers this month say that 2774 American soldiers were killed in Iraq. One of the biggest military bases, *Falcon*, south of Baghdad is badly destroyed; nothing is mentioned about it or its casualties in media. Hardly a day passes without reports and articles analyzing the bad situation in which the occupation currently is.

On the other hand, no one talks any more about Iraq descending into civil war; they say it IS in civil war now, sectarian warfare, they call it. Until 3 months ago, at least 655.000 Iraqis are killed since the invasion in 2003, most of them civilians, women and children. The country is devastated, with some dark-minded mullahs controlling its bloody streets. Nothing is functioning in Iraq now.

And what the American solution is: Dividing Iraq into 3 petty powerless "countries" in the name of federalism.

James Baker, who vowed in 1990 to bomb Iraq into the middle ages, returned back (probably to see how far Iraq is back in the middle ages) leading a congressional team to "study" the situation in Iraq and suggest the solution, but not now, after the November elections in the US. Ruling out any prospects of victory in Iraq, Baker concentrates on "stability" first, by avoiding sectarian confrontation in Iraq, which has become out of control. Hurrraaah.

Immediately after he left, the Iraqi Parliament "passed" a law of federalism. The way it was passed is a daylight made up job, exactly like the way the constitution and the elections were "passed". It is meaningless to talk about how the "law" was passed, the usual counterfeiting, fraud, pressures, and bribes. (Informed recourses say that there were no more than 119 members attending the parliament session out of 275). "President" Talabani, on his part, offered hosting the American troops in the north.

On the other hand, a group of extremist Sunnis announced establishing an Iraqi Islamic state of 8 provinces in the middle and the north, including Baghdad, which will inflame the sectarian confrontation.

But that does not mean that the Mission is accomplished? No. America is powerful enough to destroy Iraq for a while, but from our first hand experience with the Americans for the forth year now, they know very little about the Iraqi culture and psychology. Officials, journalist, experts or ordinary Americans, get what their intelligence information focuses on e.g. the weak spots in the society where they can attack. They analyze whatever data they get by their own criteria. One of their worst mistakes, for example, is that they think that they can buy the underprivileged Shiite.

They do not understand that Hakeem, Allawi, Shehristani, Sadr and the rest of the bunch do not represent the Iraqis, and that they are already burnt politically. The Iraqi resistance will continue, and get stronger and stronger everyday. The Americans do not understand the logic of history; they do not have any, anyway. If the rest of the world does not recognize the fact that it is only the resistance who represent the Iraqi people, too bad. But does the Iraq resistance give a damn?

http://www.brusselstribunal.org/ArticlesIraq3.htm

MAX FULLER ARTICLES

Diyala - A Laboratory of Civil War?

A recent case study in the dynamics of occupation and sectarianism

Max Fuller, member of the B*Russell*s Tribunal Advisory Committee.

(20 June 2006)

- **Articles** by the same author: '***For Iraq, the Salvador Option Becomes Reality***' and '***Crying Wolf: Media Disinformation and Death Squads in Occupied Iraq***' and ***Who is controlling the death squads in Iraq?***
- ***Balad Massacre once again demonstrates US orchestrated genocide*** *(09 Nov 2006)*
- ***Ghosts of Jadiriyah. A survivor's testimony*** *(14 Nov 2006)*
- ***The Assault on Adhamiya - Not Civil War Yet*** *(July 2006)*
- ***Jihad killings in Baghdad require immediate UN investigation*** *(12 July 2006)*
- ***Conflicting Media Accounts: Evidence of Iraqi Death Squad Conspiracy*** *(26 June 2006)*
- ***¡Nunca Olvida! Never Forget! The US role in Iraq's death squads*** *(July 2006)*
- **Website**: ***www.cryingwolf.deconstructingiraq.org.uk***
- **Part 1:**

Operation Knockout in Diyala Demonstrates US Collusion with Death Squads

Implications of the reports
Beyond Knockout
- **Part 2:**

Out for the count? Interpreting conflicting narratives
Uniting the narratives
Appendix: The Memory Vortex

Part 1:
Operation Knockout in Diyala Demonstrates US Collusion with Death Squads

In November last year Sunni members of the Diyala provincial council began to boycott meetings in protest at a 13 November raid on the provincial capital Baquba and surrounding towns, according to a report by UPI's Pentagon correspondent, Pamela Hess. According to a US military official, the boycotting council members sent a letter to the chairman of the council in which they alleged that that raid had been orchestrated by the Supreme Council for Islamic Revolution in Iraq (SCIRI) as part of a plan to disenfranchise Sunnis during the upcoming elections.

Such accusations chime with almost every commentator it seems both inside and outside Iraq, who have lavished criticism on SCIRI and the paramilitary militia known as the Badr Brigade associated with it. Whilst anti-occupation sources tend to regard SCIRI and Badr as US allies, the Western media have chosen to focus on their relationship with Iran, where they were primarily based since their foundation in 1982. In either case, commentators charge that SCIRI's militiamen have infiltrated or been amalgamated into Iraq's nascent security forces. Many reports make little or no distinction between the Badr Brigade and the security forces. In the Western media lens, this depiction tends to function as apologia for human rights abuses attributed to the security forces (for examples of this in action, see Soloman Moore writing in the Los Angeles Times or Jonathan Steele writing in the London Guardian).

Hess agrees with the media consensus, stating that 'anecdotal evidence of targeted and unsanctioned violence against Sunnis from cities across Iraq suggests Badr or other rogue elements have a presence throughout the ministry'. In the case of the Baquba raid which had prompted the walkout by Sunni councilors, Hess informs us that in this instance it was the Wolf Brigade, an 'Iraqi special police unit of some 2,000', that 'swept into Baqubah, the capital of Diyala province, and arrested some 300 people'. As if to clarify matters, she then tells us, citing a US military source, that 'The operation came in the wake of the appointment by the Shiite governor of Diyala of a new police chief for the province ... The new police chief has no law enforcement experience ... but he is associated with the SCIRI, the political arm of the Badr brigade'.

But in fact what initially appears to be an open and shut case is not so straightforward. While, according to the same military spokesperson, the governor may have requested the raid 'to show that he's got muscle to flex', 'US police assistance teams worked with the Wolf Brigade to plan the operation and American assets – including a surveillance drone, medical team and a quick reaction force – were assigned to support it'. Nonetheless, the spokesperson goes on to imply that support was reluctant, adding, 'We put forces with each of their units so that we could watch them work'.

In the case of the 13 November raid, outside observers are fortunate that, unlike Pamela Hess, they do not have to rely solely on one military spokesperson feeding a line to the press. The raid in question was called Operation Knockout and was the first time that the Iraqi Special Police Forces of the Ministry of the Interior had planned, prepared and executed a division-size raid 'designed to destroy or disrupt all of their [ie insurgents'] cells in a large locality in a single night'. For a far more in-depth depiction of the action, we can be grateful to US Army Col James K Greer, who was so impressed by the whole operation that he wrote an account of it for the November–December issue of *Military Review*.

The following passages are taken from Greer's account.

In late October, the minister of the interior [Bayan Jabr] told the Operations Directorate to study options for a large-scale, simultaneous strike in Diyala against a large number of suspected insurgents and their support and information networks ...

[On 5 November] the Operations Directorate provided a list of insurgent and terrorist targets to the Public Order Division commander with a warning to be prepared to move to Ba'qubah and conduct operations to detain those targets.

The Public Order Division immediately began planning, focusing on developing target folders for the hundreds of discrete targets forces would have to secure. Simultaneously, Multi-National Force-Iraq (MNF-I) was notified through its cell in the MOI National Command Center. Planning and coordination continued with an MOI/Multinational Command-Iraq (MNC-I) meeting on 9 November ...

Throughout the planning and coordination stage of Operation Knockout, Special Police Transition Teams (SPTTs) under Colonel Gordon B. 'Skip' Davis and Colonel Jeffrey Buchanan advised the Iraqis and planned and coordinated their own support to the operation. These teams of 10 to 12 soldiers lived, trained, and fought alongside the Iraqi Special Police 24 hours a day and contributed significantly to the Iraqi's development ...

At execution, Public Order Division elements, reinforced by a brigade of Iraqi Special Police commandos, moved along three separate routes to their objectives in and around Ba'qubah, conducting clean-up operations in small towns along the way ...

Operation Knockout demonstrated the necessity for and effectiveness of intelligence-based COIN [counterinsurgency] operations. The MOI Intelligence Office of the Operations Directorate spent several weeks developing the targets that would eventually be raided. Local informants confirmed potential targets, and the Intelligence Office produced one- to three-page papers detailing why each individual was targeted ... Special Police units developed a target folder for each individual. Surreptitious eyes-on provided last-minute updates to target sets.

In the rare case of Operation Knockout, we even have a third, official military account of proceedings given at a press briefing. This description adds one further important detail, which is that 70 per cent of the 377 detainees were Sunni, 30 per cent were Shia and 10 were Kurds. While these proportions may not accurately reflect the

ethno-confessional makeup of Diyala province (exact figures are hard to come by), they do indicate that the raid was far from exclusively directed against Sunni targets, despite popular impression.

Implications of the reports

This illustration of an intelligence-based counterinsurgency operation undertaken by US-trained proxy forces, which could have been written just as well about Vietnam, the Philippines, El Salvador or present-day Colombia, reveals a number of important points about the conflict in Iraq.

(i) SCIRI had no part in orchestrating Operation Knockout

One of the most important conclusions to be drawn is that we can be certain SCIRI had absolutely nothing to do with the 13 November raid on Baquba and its environs. This simple fact discredits 99% of what has been written in the mainstream media about the role of SCIRI and Badr within the new Interior Ministry.

(ii) Even within Iraq it is very difficult to accurately assess security operations

It is striking in this case that, if we are to believe Hess's sources, even public representatives on the ground in Iraq are unable to distinguish between what they perceive to be sectarian paramilitaries and the forces operating directly on behalf of the Occupation. This is in no way intended to represent a criticism of those on the ground, but only highlights the duplicity of the US Imperial war machine, whose goal is to cover its own tracks and spread discord amongst its enemies.

(iii) The Wolf Brigade continues to be used by the media as a fob-off

It is extremely revealing of the mainstream media position that even in Hess's relatively detailed and informative report, the responsibility for a joint MOI/MNF-I operation was subtly shifted towards SCIRI and that it was the Wolf Brigade which was reported to have carried out the raid. While Hess does not underline the point in this piece, the reference is unlikely to be missed altogether. The significance of the attribution is that in many media analyses of human rights abuses related to the Ministry of the Interior, the Wolf Brigade has been singled out for blame. Rather than seeking to analyze its structure, most commentators have been content to describe it as a police commando unit attached to the Interior Ministry with a specifically Shiite leaning (for instance, see the Knight Ridder report by Hannah Allam, now very hard to find on the Internet). In this UPI report, the US military spokesperson describes the Wolf Brigade as a 'public order Brigade' rather than as police commandos. In fact, the MOI special police forces are made up of both police commandos and public order brigades, all of them trained and supported by embedded advisors from MNF-I. According to Greer's account, the 13 November raid was planned by a Public Order Division and was conducted by Public Order Division elements, reinforced by a brigade of Special Police Commandos, probably the Wolf Brigade. The effect of the UPI report is once again to divert attention from structure and organization and frame discourse within narrow sectarian lines that exclude US responsibility.

(iv) Counterinsurgency operations are not in the remit of backroom militias

In view of the persistent reports that the majority of extrajudicial killings can be attributed to members of the security forces following the detention of the victims (eg UN Human Rights Mission, Iraqi Organization for Follow-up and Monitoring), it is beholden on all interested parties to take any insight into the workings of those forces and the processes by which 'targets' are selected for arrest with the utmost seriousness. Yet no journalist has so much as mentioned the existence of an Operations Directorate, still less MNF-I's cell within the MOI

National Command Center, while the one journalist that seems to have written about Operation Knockout has fallen back into the familiar groove of 'allegiance to Shiite groups' etc. The reason that I have quoted from Greer's account at such length is to demonstrate the enormous behind-the-scenes effort required to conduct counterinsurgency warfare.

To reiterate the stages by which targets were selected:

1) Two months before the operation the intelligence section of the Operations Directorate began preparing a list of suspects based on intelligence gleaned from local informers;
2) The intelligence section produced dossiers on individual suspects;
3) One week before the operation the intelligence section passed the list of suspects to the Public Order Division commander;
4) The Public Order Division prepared folders on the individual suspects, making use of an airborne mapping capability;
5) Before commencement of the operation, last minute visual checks were made of individual suspects.

In the case of Operation Knockout, which seems to have half-served as PR exercise, Greer et al are falling over themselves to persuade their audience that the police behaved in exemplary fashion and that detainees were treated humanely. So how far is it possible to regard this operation as representative and how should we evaluate such operations in human rights terms?

Beyond Knockout

By far the most important aspect of this operation from an analytical perspective is that it was 'Intelligence Based'. It is quite clear from Greer's description that what that means in layman's terms is that lists of targets were put together in some sort of centralized planning hub before being passed to individual police units responsible for seizing them in the middle of the night.

Whilst nothing like the level of detail offered in Greer's report is available for most of the cases of arrest and extrajudicial killing by the security forces, in a few accounts we do have evidence that the victims have been selected based on lists of suspects (eg see Sydney Morning Herald, 11 March 2006, Reuters, 17 November 2005), These details are the hallmarks of 'intelligence based' counterinsurgency operations and strongly indicate that most or all of the campaigns of mass arrests taking place nightly across Iraq emanate from the intelligence offices of the Interior Ministry. This impression is further reinforced by another UPI account of an earlier raid that took place in Baghdad in June 2004. Once again, we are told that the lists of suspects (in this case ordinary criminals) had been meticulously prepared in advance through the use of informers by the intelligence branch at the Ministry of the Interior, incidentally under the command of a Sunni Kurd.

Such operations simply cannot be conceived and carried out from some backroom at Badr or Mahdi HQ. If we were still to persist in advocating that SCIRI, or some such party, was behind these operations, against all of the available evidence, we would also be forced to conclude that the US had ceased to have influence inside the Interior Ministry, unless of course they were acting in tandem. In fact, we know that Iraq's entire new intelligence apparatus was built by the CIA (see Washington Post, 11 December 2003, Knight Ridder, 8 May 2005) and we can

be certain that the intelligence offices at the Interior Ministry and elsewhere remain saturated with US intelligence agents/advisors (New York Times, 14 December 2005).

And despite reassurances from the US military that Knockout represents the new style of 'humane' Interior Ministry operation, the empirical evidence keeps mounting up , day upon day, week upon week and month upon month, that death squads are continuing their genocidal campaign without stint. The latest figures from Baghdad suggest that an average of 70 new victims of extrajudicial execution appear in the Morgue every single day and these are now starting to be backed up in Basra, where we told that on average one person is killed per hour.

Let us pray that in this case the more than 300 detainees taken during Operation Knockout have indeed been treated humanely. In this case it is beholden not just on the Iraqi Ministry of the Interior but on Multi Nation Force-Iraq to demonstrate that every one of the people seized from the Baquba vicinity on 13 November has either been released or continues to be held in 'humane conditions'. If MNF-I really wants to prove that it is not responsible for the death squads, it must publicly release the names of all 377 supposed suspects so that the world can see who it is arresting and tell us where they are today. It needs to prove to its critics that the human rights of its detainees have been respected and that they have not been hung by their wrists until their arms are dislocated or beaten until it is impossible to tell the color of their skin, or burnt with cigarettes, or had their eyes gouged out or their fingernails removed. MNF-I needs to prove that one of its proxy policemen hasn't tortured a single one of them with an electric drill and thrown their body onto the street like the other thousand that appear every month in Baghdad. It needs to prove it, because otherwise we'll know for sure that this time it ordered it!

Part 2:
Out for the count? Interpreting conflicting narratives

Operation Knockout proved to be no final engagement for the security forces either in Diyala province or just around Baquba. Since then the social and political space has been dominated by at least five forms of violence. The following analysis is drawn from a trawl of mainstream Western media sources on the Internet and from a day by day examination of Iraqi Resistance reports compiled by Free Arab Voice between 13 November and the middle of May. It is not intended to be seen as comprehensive.

(i)Police/army raids
Resistance reports make reference to around a dozen supplemental raids since Operation Knockout in which hundreds more Iraqis have been detained. No information is available about the fate of the detainees and detailed reports of the raids themselves are absent. The raids are variously described as having been undertaken by 'troops', 'Interior Ministry Shock Troops', 'US occupation forces backed up by Iraqi puppet army troops', 'Interior Ministry troops', 'militiamen with official government documents issued by the Ministry of the Interior', etc. From such descriptions it is difficult to know which units were responsible, although in most cases one suspects units of the Special Police. Western media sources do not make identification any easier and fewer raids have been reported.

(ii) Resistance attacks against US/Iraqi security forces, including killings of alleged collaborators and members of Shiite militias

Most of these attacks took the form of roadside bombs, but well-orchestrated assaults on police/army bases and checkpoints were also frequently reported. A handful of alleged 'collaborators' are also reported to have been executed by Resistance fighters.

(iii) '*Mysterious*' *bombings*
Several bombs which exploded in civilian areas were described in Resistance reports as mysterious. Mosques seem to have been the intended targets in several instances; one is reported to have been Sunni, one Shiite, and two others are not attributed. Other targets included a girls' school and a crowded market. According to a report for Middle East Online, dated 1 May 2006, the police chief of Baquba claimed that 70 bombs had been planted on the city streets in the preceding two weeks alone, of which 40 had gone off, killing 12 people.

(iv) Extrajudical killings and assassinations
Several instances of extrajudicial killings bearing the hallmarks of death squads have been reported. On 23 December 2005 three bodies were found with multiple gunshot wounds in Southern Baquba; the bodies were found blindfolded with their hands and legs bound. On 23 February gunmen pulled factory workers off buses and killed 47 of them; the bullet-riddled bodies were found behind a brick factory. On 25 February 2006 13 members of a Shia family were killed in their home by gunmen. On the same day, 12 farm laborers, both Sunnis and Shiites, were found shot dead in an orchard; the victims had been shot in the head and face. On 26 February two boys were killed when gunmen opened fire on a group of teenagers playing football. On 28 February nine bodies were found in wasteland around Tarfiya; the victims had been shot in the head. On 27 March at least 18 bodies of males were found in a deserted brush area around Tarfiya; the victims are variously described as having been decapitated or having been shot in the head. On 8 April 10 bodies were found in black body bags in Balad Rooz; the victims had been shot in the head. On 19 April three professors were killed when gunmen opened fire at Diyala University. On 10 May 11 workers at an electrical plant were killed by gunmen on their way from or to work. On 13 May four unidentified bodies with bullet holes in their heads and chests were dumped in a stream in Khan Bani Saad; according to one report they were Shiites. It should be noted that the spike in reports after 23 February may well represent increased media attention following the bombing of the Askari mosque in Samarra, rather than any quantifiable surge in attacks.

(v) *Ethnic cleansing*
According to *Quds Press*, quoted in a Resistance report for 8 March, around 1000 Sunni families have fled their homes in the Madain area after receiving death threats from members of the police and special police.

While these accounts of various forms of violence and intimidation undoubtedly reflect a climate of pervasive and widespread violence, including an ongoing struggle between the forces of occupation and an organic resistance, it is extremely difficult to make objective comments about their significance. The following passages drawn from four separate accounts underline this point.

a) '*If the insurgency stays at this level, I expect to free up combat power before the end of our deployment,' [US Col] Salazar says.*
The Nation, 9 April 2006

b) *In this confessionally divided provincial capital [Baquba] just north of Baghdad, the mounting sectarian tensions that have gripped the new Iraq have spelled a spate of tit-for-tat killings of civilians as Shiite militiamen avenge attacks by Sunni insurgents, sparking a vicious circle of violence ...*

"Drive-by shootings and other gun attacks have proved deadlier, killing nearly 40 people in the past two weeks," Bawi said ...

The apparent impotence of Iraq's fledgling security forces in the face of the worsening bloodshed has sparked anger among residents.
Middle East Online, 1 May 2006

c) *rebels spread control over most of Diyala Province of which the city of Baquba is the capital.*

The city's nearly 350,000 live in a state of terror as the security forces charged with keeping law and order can hardly protect themselves.
Azzaman, 11 May 2006

d) *Mrs Mohammed is a Kurd and a Shia in Baquba, which has a majority of Sunni Arabs. Her husband, Ahmed, who traded fruit in the local market, said: 'They threatend the Kurds and the Shia and told them to get out ...*

It was impossible to travel to Baquba, the capital of Diyala, from Baghdad without extreme danger
Independent, 20 May 2006

It should be noted that the US assessment referred to here predated a major increase in attacks against occupation forces that began towards the end of April, which might well invalidate the opinion expressed by US Col Salazar.

Nonetheless, even comparing these descriptions of the overall situation with the various accounts of violence that are available is far from straightforward. The account in Middle East Online indicates a level of violence against civilians that is not adequately reflected in either the mainstream media nor the Resistance reports. However, it remains credible because we know the same relationship would hold in areas where we have a better overall impression of the extent of the violence.

Uniting the narratives

The accounts offered in the *Independent* and *Azzaman* appear to stand in total opposition to one another. If the Resistance has spread control over Diyala, surely a communitarian civil war of the kind alluded to in the *Independent* is extremely unlikely to be taking place. That is, unless we are prepared to entertain a very special definition of 'civil war'. Such a definition would require us to accept that the Resistance represents an exclusively Sunni faction (not even borne out in the US military's statistics for detained suspects, see above) and that the security forces, especially the counterinsurgency brigades, represent an exclusively Shiite faction (not borne out in any credible analysis of their composition, nor in their relationship to the occupying powers, including the presence of special police transition teams). Thus, with a fierce conflict taking place between the Occupation and the Resistance, it might indeed be possible to conclude that a 'sectarian civil war' was underway. This seems to be the preferred definition for the Western media establishment.

But what of Mrs Mohammed? It is possilbe that angry Sunnis have responded to perceived sectarian assaults in kind, but, assuming that this story is real, it seems much more likely that she and her family are the victims of a cruel deception designed to fracture the country along ethno-confessional lines. More and more evidence of such a pattern is starting to emerge, including a recent account published by the B*Russell*s Tribunal anonymously from within Iraq, which refers to evidence that the same special covert units are employed to fabricate sectarian attacks against both Sunni and Shiite Iraqis. In addition, there are indications that other killings are being carried out by death squads operating from within the paramilitary Facilities Protection Service.

If we want to make sense of what is happening in Iraq we need to recognize that words like SCIRI, Badr and Mahdi, together with phrases like civil war, sectarian violence, revenge killings and tit-for-tat murders all serve to deemphasize the centrality of the occupation and mystify what is a very real and deadly counterinsurgency war.

From an external perspective, it is extremely difficult to discern whether the Resistance has seized control of Diyala or whether a genuine civil war along sectarian lines has broken out. What we must suspect, though, based on concrete reasoning, is that the security forces trained, armed and guided by the British and Americans will be committing terrible crimes against humanity in their role as attack dogs for the occupation.

This is not to try to say that every single killing is carried out by the security forces, but it is to say that the security forces are so obviously involved in a great many cases that the Western media and other apologists for the occupation and abettors of genocide have been forced to resort to claiming that the security forces have been infiltrated by various militias. If there are militias in the Ministry of Interior, you can be sure that they are militias that stand to attention whenever a US colonel enters the room. And if there are masked gunmen claiming to be from Badr of Mahdi or anywhere else, the first question we should all be asking is where did they get their lists of victims from? For my money, they will have come straight out of the Intelligence Office of the Operations Directorate at the US-run Ministry of the Interior.

Appendix: The Memory Vortex

Communities fight back against raids

Two reports in May seem to indicate that communities are seeking ways to fight back against nighttime raids. According to an Iraqi Resistance report dated 1 May 2006, citing *Mafkarat al-Islam*, fierce fighting erupted around the areas of al-Hadid and Abu Zayd when a raid by 'Iraqi puppet police and puppet army troops' was opposed by armed residents. According to the report, nine of the assailants and dozens of locals were killed in the fighting. Following the battle, US troops joined the Iraqi forces in carrying out massive and indiscriminate arrests.

On 11 May, international press sources reported that village leaders and clerics alerted police and US soldiers when gunmen, some of them wearing military uniforms, raided two 'Sunni' villages near Khan Bani Saad. According to these reports, US and Iraqi forces were able to rescue seven of 10 men that were being abducted. Thirty people were arrested, including an unknown number of the gunmen. According to the reports, some gunmen told police they belonged to the Shiite militia loyal to Muqtada al-Sadr. This attribution was supported by the Interior Minister at the time, Bayan Jabr, who claimed that the gunmen were carrying badges identifying them as belonging to the Force Protection Service (FPS) of the Ministry of Health, which has been reported to be under

the control of Muqtada al-Sadr. A spokesman for al-Sadr subsequently claimed that that the FPS members had gone to help, according to the Christian Science Monitor.

It is difficult to believe that these two account are not related despite the time gap, although I can find no evidence that this is the case. It is also difficult not to credit the *Mafkarat al-Islam* as being a far more plausible general depiction of events. Clearly, if Sadr militiamen had formed a secret death squad to attack villages around Khan Bani Saad, we should be hearing about it all over the press. Unfortunately, this is yet another case 'under investigation' that is likely to be consigned to the dustbin of history and blacked out by the Western media.

Diyala police linked to death squads

On 27 March, in what was described as 'an unusual admission', Reuters reported that the Iraqi Interior Ministry had arrested a police major, Arkan al-Bawi, in Diyala province for operating death squads in Baquba. According to the Interior Ministry, Bawi confessed that his gang members wore police uniforms stolen during attacks on police checkpoints and that they had killed many people. On 28 March, Reuters reported that the police chief in Diyala, major-general Ghassan al-Bawi, the brother of Arkan, had been arrested for 'corruption and threatening security'. Unbelievably, even this bombshell of a story died instantly [in fact, the story now seems to have been removed from the Internet; the version offered here is copied from a printed extract of the original]. Even more remarkably, on 28 April, provincial police chief Maj. Ghassan al-Bawi was reported to have stated that troops and police were on the streets of Baquba and roads to the city were closed because of fears the insurgents might regroup [This story too is now extremely hard to come by, with only two examples still available through Google; the only other evidence that Ghassan al-Bawi has retained his post is a cached BBC page which refers to an Interview with al-Bawi in June 2006]. It appeared that the arrest of two senior police officers linked to death squads in Diyala had simply not taken place at all. Perhaps it was a case of mistaken identity. Perhaps it was another major-general Ghassan al-Bawi that had been arrested for 'threatening security'!

If we go right back to Hess's UPI report of the November 13 raid, we will recall that the new police chief 'is associated with the SCIRI, the political arm of the Badr brigade'. Is that not then newsworthy either! Mahdi militiamen in death squad arrested in act and SCIRI police appointee linked to death squads! Apparently not. One can only assume that any detailed independent investigation would rapidly be forced to conclude that neither Mahdi nor SCIRI were responsible, but the US-installed police force were.

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Conflicting Media Accounts: Evidence of Iraqi Death Squad Conspiracy

Max Fuller, 26 June 2006.

On 27 October 2005, the BBC reported the following incident.

> At least 20 Shia militiamen and Iraqi policemen have died in clashes with Sunni insurgents, Iraqi officials say.
>
> Most of those killed were Mahdi Army militiamen loyal to radical Shia cleric Moqtada Sadr. Two Iraqi policemen were also killed and others wounded.
>
> A spokesman for the militiamen said they were ambushed as they went with police to aid a comrade kidnapped by Sunni militants near Baghdad.
>
> Some reports said the clash resulted from tensions between the communities.
>
> Whether it involves insurgents or not, it is clearly a case of Sunnis fighting Shias - an alarming development in a country where the fear of civil war is increasingly coming to the fore, says the BBC's Jim Muir in Baghdad.
>
> The battle took place in the town of Nahrawan, some 15 miles (25km) south-east of Baghdad.

Yet, on the same day and describing the same incident, Thomas Wagner, filed the following report for Associated Press, BBC, Deutsche Presse-Agentur and Reuters.

> At least 27 people, most of them police, were killed in clashes with civilians in Nahrawan township, 30 kilometres south of Baghdad, Thursday, said Iraqi army sources.
>
> Captain Ahmed Jassin of the Iraqi army told Deutsche Presse- Agentur dpa that forces belonging to two brigades of the Interior Ministry launched a raid in Al-Haj village of Nahrawan to release a kidnapped person.
>
> He said the police were in civilian uniform, prompting the villagers to open fire thinking that the police were terrorists. Jassim's army brigade intervened to end the fighting.
>
> He said the severe clashes which took place killed 25 policemen and two civilians. Four villagers were arrested.

Police in civilian uniform! What on earth are readers supposed to make of that in the context of a conflict that has seen thousands of people arrested, tortured and subsequently murdered by members of the police and security forces (eg UN Human Rights Mission, Iraqi Organization for Follow-up and Monitoring).

More than merely arousing suspicion, Wagner's report recalls the recent reference to an anonymous confession by an Iraqi purporting to belong to a secret black operations unit. In the confession, the author states that special Iraqi forces were created before and after the occupation by US and Israeli officers to infiltrate all of the branches

of the new security apparatus. Once in position, these agents have been used to fabricate sectarian attacks against both Sunnis and Shiites. According to the confession, they attack Sunnis 'in uniforms, IDs and police cars' and they attack Shiites 'in cars normally used by the Mujahideen' and undoubtedly 'in civilian uniform'. Clearly, the 'Shia militiamen' at Nahrawan were at pains not to be identified as police, so were their intended victims in this case Shiite?

It's hard to know. According to an Iraqi Resistance Report compiled by Free Arab Voice, the Sunni resistance organization Jaysh Ansar as-Sunnah posted a statement on the Internet in which they claimed that forces of the National Guard and puppet police, who had arrived in 50 white non-military pickups, attempted to arrest local men during morning prayers. A violent confrontation developed in which local villagers and residents of nearby villages joined forces against the raiders. According to the Jaysh Ansar as-Sunnah version of events, Mahdi militiamen fought alongside the security forces.

From an alternative perspective, Shaykh 'Ali al-Musawi', a leader of the Sadr movement in Diyala Province stated that 'what a number of members of the Jaysh al-Mahdi or its patrons [??] did should not be counted against the Muqtada as-Sadr movement as a whole' and that the movement 'is united with the Resistance on one goal and that is the definite requirement that the American occupation must depart Iraq and that the unity of Iraq – the land and the people – must be safeguarded' (op cit.).

Whether or not the forces that participated in this incident were part of a covert operations unit isn't particularly important. What is important is that they were not the Shiite militiamen linked to Muqtada al-Sadr that the BBC wants us to believe. Infiltrated or not, they belonged to two brigades of the Interior Ministry and were disowned by the Sadr movement. If further militiamen really were present, they attacked as auxiliaries to the police units.

All of this is particularly significant in view of the number of supposedly sectarian attacks that have been taking place in the Nahrawan area as part of a campaign of terrorization and ethnic cleansing.

The best-documented case involves an assault on the village of Al-Fursan by 'hordes of men in black, who were driving cars of the ministry of interior' on 27 February 2006. Eight people, including a 10-year-old boy, were executed and property and livestock was destroyed. According to Voice of Freedom and Human Rights and the Red Crescent, the residents did not try to protect themselves because they believed the killers to be police. In this case the victims appear to have been Sunni families.

Similar attacks are reported to have occurred against Shiite families.

If you can find them, maybe you can hire ... the Mahdi Army!

According to Paul McGeough of the Sydney Morning Herald, the mayor of Nahrawan has turned to the Mahdi Army to provide security for his 'Shiite' ward in the absence of alternative law-enforcement agencies capable of taking on the 'insurgency'. Of course, McGeough knows perfectly well, as does Edward Wong of the New York Times, that the Mahdi Army that they're talking about is the one that receives its uniforms, weapons, training and salaries from the US-sponsored state. For such commentators, the solution to this apparent contradiction is to conclude that the militias draw their pay by day and conduct their real business by night.

So is McGeough claiming that the mayor of Nahrawan is content to only receive his protection after hours from some yawning militiamen who've only just had time to change out of their uniforms before undertaking raids? Or, if there's a grain of truth to his story, is he suggesting that the mayor is actually benefiting from the presence of units of the Iraqi security forces? If so, it would be more helpful if he would tell his readers which ones. We can assume that they're not ordinary policemen because Nahrawan already has ordinary policemen. So what does that leave? It essentially leaves units of the Iraqi special police, either Public Order Battalions or Special Police Commandos.

In fact, the description of both the 27 October and 27 February raids sound very much like the kind of operations being undertaken by the specialist counterinsurgency units attached to the Ministry of the Interior. The members of such units might or might not have belonged to the Mahdi Army or the Badr Brigade, but within the units of the Special Police they live, work and fight alongside embedded US special-forces trainers. And, even more importantly, their operations are carefully planned by the new CIA-built intelligence apparatus and orchestrated by American intelligence operatives (see 'Operation Knockout: Coin in Iraq').

Whichever way you want to cut it, the bungled raid of 27 October is yet one more example of the US-directed war being actively waged against the Iraqi people and Jim Muir is yet one more example of the liars of the mainstream media who are attempting to cover up the tracks of their genocidal colleagues. In view of the lack of credible reporting and the terrible gravity of the events unfolding, the only immediate solution is to demand independent investigations by international bodies into what is taking place. Who could possibly oppose so utterly reasonable and humane a demand? Only those whose hands are steeped in blood and those devoted to protecting them.
http://www.brusselstribunal.org/DiyalaFuller.htm



¡Nunca Olvida! Never Forget!
The US role in Iraq's death squads

Max Fuller, member of the B*Russell*s Tribunal Advisory Committee.

(July 2006)

Articles by the same author:

- '***For Iraq, the Salvador Option Becomes Reality***' | ***"Voor Irak wordt de 'Salvador-optie' realiteit"*** and '***Crying Wolf: Media Disinformation and Death Squads in Occupied Iraq***' ***(www.globalresearch.ca)*** and ***Who is controlling the death squads in Iraq?*** '
- ***Ghosts of Jadiriyah. A survivor's testimony*** *(14 Nov 2006)*
- ***Balad Massacre once again demonstrates US orchestrated genocide*** *(09 Nov 2006)*
- ***The Assault on Adhamiya - Not Civil War Yet*** *(July 2006)*
- ***Jihad killings in Baghdad require immediate UN investigation*** *(12 July 2006)*
- ***Conflicting Media Accounts: Evidence of Iraqi Death Squad Conspiracy*** *(26 June 2006)*
- ***Diyala - A Laboratory of Civil War?*** *(20 June 2006)*
- **Website**: ***www.cryingwolf.deconstructingiraq.org.uk***

Hector Gomez Calito's body was found by the road, 18 miles outside Guatemala City, his legs and stomach burnt, his tongue cut out.
'Death in the Afternoon', Edwin Charles, New Socialist April 1986

The year was 1986 and Guatemala had just just emerged from 31 years of military dictatorship. The death toll stood at 138,000 since the CIA-engineered coup of 1954. The government had officially blamed the violence on everything from foreigners to the heat, yet most of the victims had been 'disappeared' by the various branches of the security forces (or private death squads largely made up of moonlighting members of the police or army), armed, trained and supported by the US military. Guatemala's democratic 'opening' made little difference to the disenfranchised majority struggling for basic rights; nor did it halt the ravages of the security forces, which found themselves in a stronger position, free to pursue their internally directed war behind a 'constitutional veneer'. By 1989 the death toll for the decade alone had reached some 100,000 killed and another 40,000 disappeared.

You can find a similar story in El Salvador, where the US felt it necessary, first, to engineer a civilian, José Napoléon Duarte, as president in 1980 and then to insist on constitutional (1982) and presidential (1984) elections. Such a commitment to 'democracy' provided the necessary gloss for the massive expansion of US military involvement under the Reagan administration, leading to a decade of brutal internal conflict. In fact, the US ran the war in El Salvador through a handful of assets in key positions and a military mission whose role was to create counterinsurgency forces to take the war to the guerrilla while the bulk of the armed forces held static positions. The result was a genocidal war of aggression against the Salvadoran population, whose targets, as Chomsky reminds us, were 'peasants, labour organizers, students, priests or anyone suspected of working in the interests of the people'.

The full extent of the US role in El Salvador was not evident at the time. It has taken the courage of dedicated investigators in truth commissions, the heartbreaking work of forensic anthropologists and the first-hand testimonies of former soldiers and torturers to break the conspiracy of silence.

Serious scholars and activists of Latin American history, and US Imperialism in general, have learned to recognize the role and impact of US involvement in 'counterinsurgency' wars. A whole movement in the US is dedicated to

closing down the notorious School of the Americas (recently renamed the Western Hemisphere School of Security Cooperation), because activists know that despite the human rights courses and the lessons in bomb disposal, many of the war criminals that have plagued Latin America over recent decades are the alumni of that academy of war.

Such activists have also learned to mistrust the Western media, which has consistently misrepresented or failed to report the horrific crimes committed by US proxy armies. Those activists have listened closely to the voices of the people in struggle and recorded their testimonies as part of their campaign to bring an end to US military training and assistance programs. Laboratories have been established on the ground to investigate and analyze the crimes of the state, as well as to dignify the memories of the victims. Uncovering the truth is not a matter of taking selected quotations from mainstream press articles or reading through blogs, but of building real links with organizations rooted in popular struggle.

In relation to the ongoing occupation and destruction of Iraq, activists and analysts like myself have scoured the information available at a distance and have tried to hear and understand the voices coming from the ground to the best of our ability. It is not a substitute for the kind of real solidarity work that I have been describing, but, for those of us who have looked at the US mode of war, it is enough to recognize the evidence of active US involvement with death squads and genocidal intelligence-based counterinsurgency operations – and we have tried to continue hearing those Iraqi voices despite the ceaseless cacaphony of disinformation put out by the Occupying powers and disseminated by the entire apparatus of the corporate media in their thrall.

In a very concrete sense, we have tried to hang a monumental question mark on the mightiest propaganda machine the world has ever known. In so doing, speaking for myself, I have questioned every assumption that I hold day after day, time after time and always been forced back to the same position: that the supposed sectarian violence afflicting Iraq is entirely an artifice of the Occupation and that British and American imperialism is not only attempting to fabricate a civil war, but is directly responsible for the vast majority of the violence, including the death squads.

It is no surprise to find that these views are challenged by such apologists as Stephen Zunes, who writes that 'there is little evidence to suggest that US trainers have actively encouraged death squad activity' (just as there is no 'evidence' that Negroponte knew anything about the death squads in El Salvador or Honduras) despite an avalanche of material available to any prepared to look. Nor is it any surprise that these views are ridiculed at such bastions of learning as the Conflict Studies Research Centre of the Defence Academy of the UK.

But it comes as a shock to find these arguments under assault from commentators criticizing an article in which I called for an independent investigation into the killings of three lawyers defending Saddam Hussein and other members of the former Iraqi government on the grounds that I have not heard and understood what is happening in Iraq. Their argument is that rather than focusing on US control of the Iraqi security apparatus, we should be looking at the involvement of Iraq's two most famous Shiite militias, the Mahdi Army of Radical Cleric Muqtada al Sadr and the Badr Brigade, linked to the Supreme Council for Islamic Revolution in Iraq.

There are both micro and macro dimensions to the criticism of my article, both of which I would like to have the opportunity to address. The micro dimensions consist in a detailed critique of my article along the following lines.

1) I claimed that the murdered lawyer Khamis al-Obeidi had been hauled from his home in the middle of the night by Interior Ministry representatives when in fact, according to his bereaved wife, 20 men in civilian clothes who identified themselves as members of a ministry security brigade burst into their home in the early hours of the morning while the family slept; Mr Obeidi had little chance to reply before he was seized. It is hard to see how my rendering of the event differs notably from the related facts, which of course formed the basis of my account.

2) I failed to mention that Mehdi Army militiamen are reported to have paraded Mr Obeidi around the Al Thawra (Sadr City) district of Baghdad before his murder and subsequently celebrated his killing with refreshments in the streets. It is true that I did not refer to this account on one blog that is no longer available, but only referred to the disposal of My Obeidi's body under an image of the Ayatollah al-Sadr, Muqtada al-Sadr's father. However, my point was that most murderers try to conceal their crimes or transpose the blame to others. A spokesman for Muqtada al-Sadr 'angrily denied' the accusations. It should also be noted that the account of militiamen parading Mr Obeidi refers to a Mehdi Army leader named Abu Der'ra. Perhaps they would have heard the residents of Sadr City who denied that Abu Deraa was a resident of the area, or even the Thawra councilman and senior Sadr official, who insisted that Deraa is not a member of the Mehdi Army. In fact, Deraa is being referred to as the 'Shiite Zarqawi' and, I suggest, is just as much a psyop.

3) I failed to discuss an aspect of the background to the killings of the three lawyers, namely that Muqtada al-Sadr and two of his spokesmen had made hostile comments towards the trial of Saddam Hussein. I would like to deal with the various comments separately.

(i) The most substantively incriminating comment was made by Shaikh Raid al-Kadhimi in July 2004 from the 'pulpit of Baghdad's Kadhimiya Shrine'. The problem with using this as evidence against Muqtada al-Sadr is that Kadhimi seems an unreliable spokesman. Kadhimi himself had been in exile in Syria for a number of years before the US invasion (unlike Muqtada al-Sadr) and the Kadhimiya Shrine where he spoke has been strongly linked with another al-Sadr, Muqtada's uncle Hussein al-Sadr, who was not only also in exile, but strongly supported the US invasion and dines with Colin Powel. Hussein al-Sadr is not close to Muqtada, but is closely associated with US/UK intelligence asset Ayad Allawi.

(ii) Shaik Awad Khafaji and Muqtada al-Sadr are both reported to have demanded the execution of Saddam Hussein. I don't have to agree with their position to point out that in neither statement, as far as I am aware, were specific threats made against the lawyers themselves. From Muqtada al-Sadr's position, one possible outcome of killing the defence lawyers must surely be the removal of the trial to a country where the death penalty would not even be an option. On every count it would be an act of unbridled stupidity on al-Sadr's part to sanction the murder of Saddam Hussein's lawyers and there is no evidence that he has done so.

The point of my article was to emphasize the role of the US-built Ministry of the Interior and its forces and to argue that there is abundant grounds to suspect British and American involvement in most of the killings taking place, quite apart from any moral or legal argument that they are responsible by dint of being in occupation. In taking this position I was in fact listening to many of the voices I hear coming from Iraq, as well as to the victims and fighters, alive and dead, from every other US imperialist aggression.

For instance, I was listening to the murdered lawyer Khamis Obeidi, who stated, 'The government bears the responsibility because it is supposed to protect the citizens. If there were a serious investigation into the previous murder of Janabi and the perpetrators had been arrested, we would not see today's crime.'
I was listening to Saddam Hussein's chief lawyer Khalil al-Dulaimi, who said, 'We strongly condemn this act [the killing of Mr Obeidi] and we condemn the killings done by the Interior Ministry against Iraqis.'
I was listening to Freedom Voice Society for Human Rights, which is calling for a factfinding mission of the UN, the Arab League or International Organisations and wants peacekeeping forces to protect civilians.
I was listening to an Iraqi professor who wrote that his colleagues were being killed by professional assassins, none of whom have been arrested; he said 'nobody has taken responsibility, and reasons have not been clarified.'
I was listening to the Shiite farmers who wake up to find typewritten flyers on their doorsteps telling them to leave the mixed communities where they have shared their whole lives with their Sunni neighbors and relatives.
I was listening to the boy whose ears were burnt off in a fire in a police station where he should never have been but was held for stealing some lengths of electrical cable in order to live.
I was listening to the street vendors forced off their pitch by the police and left with no means of subsistence.
I was listening to the workers encountered by Naomi Klein who said they would rather blow up their factory with themselves in it than see it privatized.
I was listening to tales of torture and horror coming out of every US-installed detention facility and every 'security' unit given unnatural life by US trainers.
I was listening to the Iraqi Organization for follow-up and monitoring who stated: "After exact counting and documenting, the Iraqi Organisation for Follow-up and Monitoring has confirmed that 92 % of the 3498 bodies found in different regions of Iraq have been arrested by officials of the Ministry of Interior. Nothing was known about the arrestees' fate until their riddled bodies were found with marks of horrible torture. It's regrettable and shameful that these crimes are being suppressed and that several states receive government officials, who fail to investigate these crimes."

The 'macro dimension' to criticisms of my article actually has very little to do with the substance of the particular piece. Their real objection is that in consistently drawing on detailed evidence, including US military sources, to examine the role of the US military-intelligence apparatus within the ongoing violence in Iraq, I have systematically downplayed the involvement of the Badr Brigade and the Mehdi Army.

The truth is that, aside from anecdotal allegations from fairly spurious sources, there is no publicly available information on the organisation or structure of either group and spokespersons for both of them assiduously deny their involvement. Even more significantly, Muqtada al-Sadr has been steadfast in opposing sectarianism, as Dahr Jamail, amongst others, has noted. Such a stance simply does not square with his characterisation as one of the arch villains in an internally driven conflict. You don't need to be an Islamist to see that. Even that other arch fiend, Bayan Jabr, whose offices crawled with US agents, appeared out of his depth, desperately thrusting passports at impassive journalists who would rather crucify him with letters than pose a single rudimentary question about US collusion. Yet no charges are forthcoming against Jabr and it is the US state, not he, that has the more distinguished pedigree in violence.

What we do have is a growing body of eyewitness testimonies from Iraqis asserting the presence of members of one or other militia group. Such assertions are blown out of all proportion within the mainstream western media by writers who have never seriously questioned the role of US military-intelligence advisors in orchestrating the

death squads despite a barrage of evidence. The views of journalists who take this line can be discarded as trash, but not those of the Iraqis, who, undoubtedly, genuinely see the involvement of both Badr and Mehdi militiamen.

The problem with such testimonies is not in their credibility but in their ability to perceive the structures and follow the chains of command of the various armed groups that are assaulting them. Despite truisms, the truth is that sometimes you can feel the effect of the lash, but not see the hand that is wielding it.

The most consistent detail in all accounts of raids and arrests/kidnappings is the presence of members of the new Iraqi armed forces, be they members of the National Guard (now regular army), blue-shirted policemen or paramilitary members of the Special (now National) Police. This phenomenon is so pointed that no one can seriously discuss the role of militias as death squads without qualifying their position by arguing that these militias have integrated themselves within branches of the security forces to the extent that they have become essentially indistinguishable from the security forces, with the security forces themselves (parts of them at least) now operating as the sectarian militias. Empirically, this is an extraordinarily weak position, as I have attempted to argue with detailed examinations of the relationship between such forces and the US military-intelligence apparatus.

What this leaves essentially are the eyewitnesses who report seeing members of one or other militia operating **alongside** members of the security forces.

So who are the 'militiamen' that Iraqis have seen and, in the case of the recent raids in Adhamiya, even captured? One possible answer is that they are the same plainclothes intelligence operatives that a UPI journalist witnessed participating in a Baghdad raid in June 2004, well before anyone had charged that the Ministry of the Interior or any Iraqi police forces had been infiltrated by Shiite militiamen. Such intelligence operatives might also constitute the mysterious Field Intelligence Units that Gen Rasheed Flayih, the head of the Police Commandos, uses as a euphemism for the death squads. Might such units be made up of 'militiamen'? We know they are, or at least that they were. From the outset of the occupation, the CIA took the 'top intelligence agents' from each of the main exile political groups and hammered them into the Collection Management and Analysis Directorate, which was to become the new *Mukhabharat* under the Sunni former Baathist general Mohammed Abdullah Shahwani. In November 2003 the Occupation authority formed a paramilitary unit 'composed of militiamen from the country's five largest political parties' to 'track down insurgents'. I drew attention to all of this in my article 'Crying Wolf: Media Disinformation and Death Squads in Occupied Iraq'. Do these agents knock on people's doors saying 'I'm from the Badr Brigade'? I sincerely doubt it, but even if they do, it is no reason to situate the intelligence apparatus underlying Iraq's death squads anywhere but, ultimately, with the Occupying forces. For instance, we know that the raids conducted by the paramilitary Special Police are overseen by Multi National Force-Iraq operatives. A second possibility is that local 'defence' forces of the kinds seen in Latin America are being organized by the state and deliberately given a sectarian character. If such units exist (I have seen no evidence that they do), they too will operate within the framework of the Occupation's military-intelligence apparatus.

The one thing that is really certain, is that whoever these militiamen are, they would not be able to operate without the active collusion of the Ministry of the Interior and the Occupation forces. This fact is crystal clear when we consider that units like the Special Police Commandos, which have been closely linked with death squads and militias, operate with embedded US special forces trainers at the battalion level (ie about the ratio of teacher

to student in most class rooms), who live, work, patrol and sleep with the units. It is therefore entirely appropriate to focus on the intellectual authorship of this genocidal campaign of murder at its **highest level** in order to seek ways to prevent further crimes and prosecute those responsible. One such way would be to press for an independent international investigation by an agency such as the UN Special Rapporteur on extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions. Such an investigation must not be charged with examining **specific** organizations; it must be charged with **investigating** the thousands of extrajudicial killings taking place across Iraq and determining responsibility, wherever it may lie. This is in no way an alternative to ending the occupation, but is an integral part of campaigning to uncover the crimes of the occupiers, end the occupation and act in solidarity with Iraqis facing terrible persecution. It is in just this spirit that Dennis Kucinich wrote an open letter to Donald Rumsfeld, exposing the complicity of the US war machine, not in defending Muqtada al-Sadr or the Supreme Council for Islamic Revolution in Iraq.

As I wrote at the beginning of this article, it took years of agony to finally uncover a tiny fraction of the true extent of US complicity in El Salvador's killing fields. Soldiers tormented with guilt finally had the courage to come forward at the risk of their own lives to reveal their roles in collecting information through savage torture and murder, information that was laid on the adjacent desks of US intelligence operatives, minus only the gory details of how it had been obtained. The value of such testimonies is in revealing the structure and logic of US counterinsurgency wars, so that their lessons never are forgotten.

Iraq's 'democratic opening' was just as vital a fig leaf for all-out dirty war as Duarte's civilian presidency was in El Salvador. At this moment all of the voices are telling us the same thing and that is that US-trained, armed and backed forces are committing yet another genocide. Islamofascism is just another cover for ruthless political, economic and social repression, with Shiite militiamen in Iraq no more needing to take their orders from Tehran than Guatemalan death squads needed to take theirs from the Vatican. The objective is not a mystery. It is total neo-colonial domination. Let's focus on what is concrete and start looking for ways to protect Iraqis from the wolves and wolf brigades that Anglo-American imperialism has unleashed on them. Focusing on the Mehdi Army or the Badr Brigades is exactly what the Occupation wants the anti-war movement to do, providing the real criminals with 'plausible denial' and building a climate in which Iraq can be successfully dismembered.

Appendix
The Assault on Adhamiya - Not Civil War Yet

After numerous reports of fighting in the Adhamiya district of Baghdad over the last few months, many of them drawing on first-hand testimonies, it would probably surprise few of those who have paid attention to descriptions of Sunni vs Shia warfare, that the area is Tiger Brigade territory.

What might come as slightly surprising is to learn that the Tiger Brigade is not the feared Shiite predator, against whom residents of the predominantly Sunni district have thrown up barricades and formed neighbourhood self-defence groups. Instead, the Tiger Brigade is the 2nd Brigade of the 6th Iraqi Army Division (erroneously referred to in most reports as National Guard), headquartered at the old Defence Minsistry building, based in al Thawra (Sadr City) and responsible for a large swathe of Baghdad east of the Tigris, including al-Adhamiya.

The best known and best reported part of the ongoing battle for Adhamiya took place on the nights of 17 and 18 April 2006, when gunmen stormed the neighborhood and were resisted by local forces. What role did Tiger play? According to one local 'the National Guards that are usually patrolling the street left'. Did they melt away out of fear of the gunmen? Did they secretly or openly sympathize with the gunmen's aims? Were they obeying arcane orders passed down from the Ministry of Interior (MOI) not to interfere with the raid? I suggest the answer is none of those, but that the troops of the 2nd Brigade did not disappear, but redeployed to the perimeter of a predefined area of operations as part of a diligently orchestrated assault ('cordon and search') of the district. In doing so, they would have been fulfilling a role that US trainers had devised for them, and, no doubt, the Military Transition Team (MiTT), the 506th Regimental Combat Team of the 101st Airborne Division under Lt Col Paul Finken, would have been on hand to ensure that the job was done properly.

From what we know of such planned raids, the actual forces that enter the area of operations are usually paramilitary units of the Special (now National) Police, formerly made up of Police Commandos and Public Order Brigades, now simply consisting of two divisions with around eight individual brigades. This seems to be essentially consistent with what happened on the night of 17 April, with first-hand accounts stating that the intruders were special police forces from MOI. Nothing so far is out of step with what we should expect from a carefully planned counterinsurgency operation (eg see the account of Operation Knockout).

Where doubt about the identity of the attackers and intellectual authorship of the assault starts to creep in is with the eyewitnesses who made the following statements (see 'The assault on Adhamiya: Limitations and perspectives of war reporting from Iraq' and 'Baghdad Slipping into Civil War').

'*Shia attacked a Sunni mosque*'

'*Special forces from the Ministry of Interior, probably Badr brigades*'

'*these were members of the Badr militia and Sadr's Mehdi Army who were raiding the neighborhood*'

'*I have seen these members of the Badr militia and Mehdi Army wearing Iraqi Police uniforms and using Iraqi Police pick-up trucks roaming our streets*'

'*Some were just wearing civilian clothes with black face masks, others were definitely commandos from the ministry of the interior*'

Such statements deserve neither to be dismissed, not patronised, but they do need to be questioned.

What seems clear is that many of the intruders were indeed MOI Special/National Police units and that the description of them as either Badr of Mehdi militiamen, though undoubtedly believed, relies solely on the **assumption** that such forces have been thoroughly infiltrated by these two Shiite militias. This simply is not true, certainly to any practical effect, as a wealth of evidence demonstrates (for instance, Major General Rick Lynch, who headed the training mission for the Public Order Division, highlights the mixed ethno-sectarian make-up of the Special/National Police).

More challenging are the accounts of un-uniformed attackers in balaclavas. Could these not be Shiite militiamen loyal to Badr of Mehdi working alongside MOI forces? I believe not. Firstly because we know from a June 2004 UPI account of a raid in Baghdad (now mysteriously removed from the Internet and only currently available here) that plainclothes intelligence officers accompany MOI operations.

Secondly because, despite the initial absence of US ground forces, we can be confident that the raid had been coordinated with Multi National Force-Iraq, ie the Occupation. For instance, several witnesses reported the presence of helicopters overhead, while others mentioned that US soldiers joined the attackers subsequent to the initial incursion – these soldiers almost certainly constituted the Quick Reaction Force (QRF) that US Army spokesman Rick Lynch told journalists was dispatched (ie a planned operation was not going according to plan). That US forces were not present from the outset is not surprising. This is exactly what the US has been wanting to achieve and Lynch boasts that 60% of patrols are now conducted by Iraqi forces (op cit.). In fact, as independent journalist Dahr Jamail rightly points out, the new US *modus operandi* sounds disturbingly similar (if not identical) to what just occurred in Adhamiya.

'Iraqi forces would take the lead, supported by American air power, special operations, intelligence, embedded officers and back-up troops. Helicopters suitable for urban warfare, such as the manoeuverable AH-6 'Little Birds' ... are likely to complement ground attacks.'

So if 'militiamen' were present, we absolutely have to assume that they were under US oversight, making any accusations against Badr or Mahdi irrelevant.

Dude, where's my civil war?

With the greatest possible respect to the Iraqis living and dying through this Occupation-imposed nightmare and to the commentators who are understandably confused by the inherent duplicity of 'dirty wars', it must be emphasized that it does no favors to the Iraqis to overblow the supposed sectarian dimension of the ongoing conflict.

In fact, one of the most revealing aspects of the Adhamiya battle is that it is most definitely not Sunni vs Shia. We know that the US proxy forces are not exclusively Shiite, despite popular misconceptions. It should also not be forgotten that the 'predominantly Sunni area of Adhamiya' is, de facto, mixed! Of all the unlikely sources, it is the New York Times that reveals that on one block in Adhamiya, Sunnis and Shiites stood guard on rooftops and at street corners **together**. This shouldn't really surprise us. The residents of Adhamiya and Kadhamiya, a predominantly Shiite district, got together to send relief to the residents of Fallujah during the US siege. It took the destruction of the bridge linking the two communities and the imposition of roadblocks to start breaking down that sense of solidarity.

Undoubtedly, the unity of Iraq is under desperate threat and the actions of the Occupation are producing extraordinary tensions. That is by design. Nevertheless, the closest thing to a civil war in Adhamiya is that ordinary Iraqis are attempting to protect themselves from the ravages of Iraqi mercenaries fighting for the Occupation. That some Iraqis, at the sharpest end of violence, propaganda and active disinformation campaigns (psyops), are started to falter in their belief in a shared destiny for all Iraqis is hardly surprising. It is the duty of

the anti-war movement to listen to them, but is not our duty to follow them when they are deceived down blind alleys. It is also our duty to understand what is going on to the best of our ability and to try to find ways of building active solidarity with all sectors of Iraqi society in struggle.
Max Fuller *(July 2006)*

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JIHAD KILLINGS IN BAGHDAD REQUIRE IMMEDIATE UN INVESTIGATION

The Massacre in al Jihad

On Sunday 9 July 2006 several carloads of masked gunmen entered the Jihad district of western Baghdad from the main road to Baghdad International Airport (BIA) (Associated Press), where they commenced to kill at least 40 people.

The masked gunmen set up fake **police checkpoints** (BBC), where they proceeded to stop cars and demanded to see passengers' identification cards (AP, BBC)

The masked gunmen pulled drivers from their cars (BBC). It is **presumed** that they were looking for Sunni names (AP via ABC).

The gunmen roamed the neighbourhood (AP) and entered some houses (BBC).

The slaughter lasted several hours, according to Alaa Makki, a spokesman for the Iraqi Islamic party (Guardian).

US and Iraqi security forces sealed off the area (AP , BBC).

A spokesman for a Sunni clerical association, Mohammed Beshar al-Faydhi, blamed the attack on the Mehdi Army, associated with Shiite cleric Muqtada al-Sadr (AP).

Al-Sadr denies responsibility and has called for Sunnis and Shiites to join hands (AP).

Iraq's Deputy Prime Minister, Salam al-Zubaie, **blamed Iraqi security forces for the attack** . (AP) .

The Prime Minister's office claimed al-Zubaie's statements did not represent the government's official position (AP).

Unanswered Questions

A key issue that has not so far been addressed is how several carloads of masked gunmen were able to move along the main road to Baghdad International Airport to commit massacres over the course of hours - described by the BBC's Jonny Dymond as 'breathtaking'- in an area adjacent to the road, without being intercepted.

Route Irish

As every journalist familiar with Baghdad undoubtedly knows, the main road between Baghdad International Airport and the Green Zone, code named Route Irish, is one of the most heavily militarised zones in Baghdad.

Route Irish -- the military name for the infamous road leading to Baghdad International Airport and a northern boundary line for 2-6's territory -- has grown more secure in past months, a feat accomplished mainly through a significant increase in soldiers. The last roughly 3-mile stretch of the road has up to 500 Iraqi police officers present at any time. About 150 of them are on duty at checkpoints along the road, Smith said. In addition, U.S. forces also keep a regular patrol schedule on the road.
Kimberly Johnson, USA Today, 5 July 2006

The road [Route Irish] is heavily patrolled, both on the ground, and in the air with UAVs and helicopters. As a result, terrorists have to go to extraordinary lengths just to plant a roadside bomb on Route Irish. Terrorists have largely given up trying to sneak out at night to plant a roadside bomb on Route Irish, as they continue to do on thousands of kilometers of less heavily patrolled roads.
James Dunnigan, Strategypage, 6 June 2005

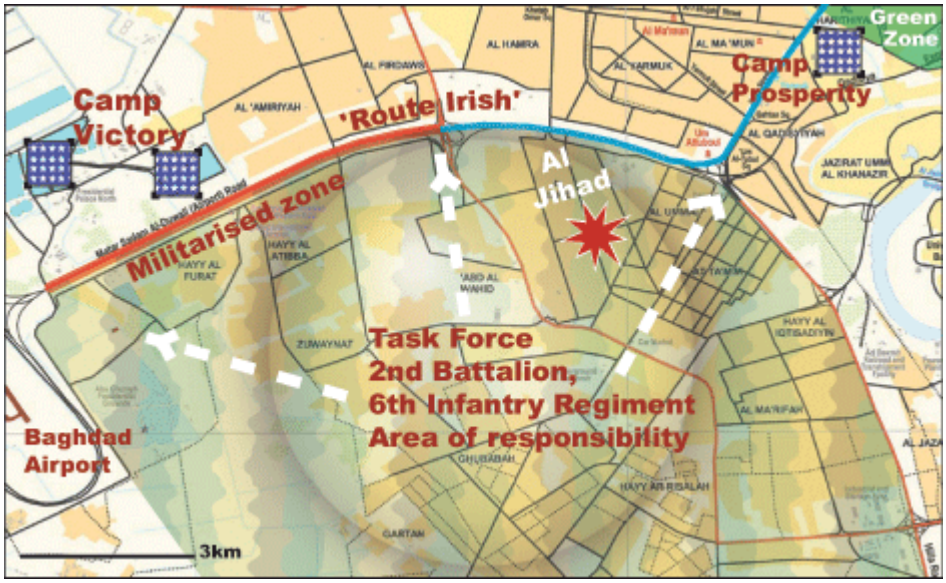
Two major US military bases lie at either end of Route Irish (see map), Camp Victory close to the airport, occupying the sprawling Abu Ghraib Palace complex, and Camp Prosperity in the al-Salam Palace just before the Green Zone.

Both camps are within a few kilometers of the Jihad district, connected by a fast, multilane expressway.

Camp Victory is the nerve cell for Multi National Force-Iraq , containing underground intelligence bunkers and specialist surveillance units.

Both camps contain US military Quick Reaction Forces (Victory , Prosperity), capable of responding within 15 minutes.

The Jihad district lies within the area of responsibility of the 2nd Battalion of the 6th Infantry Regiment, whose important northern perimeter is Route Irish.



Failure to Intervene

It is impossible to believe that large groups of gunmen belonging to unsanctioned militias could have made their way to the Jihad district by way of Route Irish and conducted static paramilitary operations without attracting attention. It is equally impossible to believe that US forces were unable to take any more-effective action than sealing the area after the massacre.

In view of the allegations that Ministry of Interior security forces were involved in the incident and the fact that US forces failed to take effective action to prevent an attack within minutes' drive of two major US army bases, it is stressed that **there must be an independent international enquiry into the attack of 9 July 2006 in the Jihad district and into the ongoing wave of violence linked to Iraq's security forces**.

It is not acceptable to make vague accusations about Shiite militiamen infiltrating security forces that have been trained and armed, and continue to be nurtured, by Multi National Force-Iraq.

Nor is it acceptable for the governments of those countries that set this genocide in motion to wash their hands of responsibility for the events now taking place before our eyes.

Action must be urgently taken to find out who is responsible for this and other 'death squad' style killings, bring the perpetrators to justice and halt the wave of murder unleashed by the Invasion and Occupation of Iraq. It is not too late to prevent a civil war taking place in Iraq.

http://www.brusselstribunal.org/Fuller.htm

Balad Massacre once again demonstrates US orchestrated genocide

(Max Fuller, 09 November 2006)

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Website: ***www.cryingwolf.deconstructingiraq.org.uk***

All truth is safe and nothing else is safe, but he who keeps back truth, or withholds it from men, from motives of expediency, is either a coward or a criminal.
Max Fuller, 19th century philosopher

The tragic events that unfolded in Balad over the weekend of 13-14 October, in which around 60 residents lost their lives, have once again been portrayed as an example of inter-communal sectarian violence. In reality, as in every other reported instance, they prove that Iraq's US-trained, equipped and supported forces are responsible for the flood of killings attributed to Shiite death squads.

Untangling events

According to US military spokesmen, and reiterated in mainstream media outlets, the cycle of violence in Balad began on Friday 13 October, when insurgents murdered 17 farm labourers in the vicinity of Duluiyah.

The labourers are reported to have been Shiites and the killings have consequently been labelled as sectarian murders by Sunni insurgents.

Seldom picked up in the press is the fact that in relation to these killings, two local police officers have been arrested.

On the same day (Friday 13 October), according to Major General William Caldwell, spokesman for Multinational Force-Iraq, a small Quick Reaction Force (QRF) was dispatched to Balad, some 5 miles from Duluiyah, based on unconfirmed reports that some Iraqis had been murdered.

The QRF made contact with unspecified local security forces to offer military assistance. Caldwell did not clarify why the US army considered that Iraqi security forces might need assistance in Balad on 13 October. The likeliest explanation is that MNF-I was aware that a major security operation was about to commence in Balad. Caldwell states that local authorities did not want any additional ground support, but requested overhead assets (helicopters presumably) and intelligence-collecting assets, which were made available. Once again, the presence of such assets indicates that a security operation was underway. From that point on, an unknown number of US forces (Caldwell suggests a platoon) continued patrolling actively in Balad.

According to media reports the violence in Balad began the following day, Saturday 14 October. Whilst many resident undoubtedly hold militias responsible, eyewitnesses are quite clear that units of the National Police

assisted Shiite elements in their attacks on Sunnis. Again, this is what we would expect from a government-sponsored operation.

Was the Mahdi Army present?

According to Ellen Knickmeyer of the *Washington Post*, citing a local Shiite cleric, frightened Shiite elders contacted the office of Moqtada al-Sadr in Kadhimiyah on 13 October.

In response, Mahdi fighters in plain clothes allegedly crowded into two buses and headed for Balad, followed by more Mahdi fighters in army uniforms and vehicles, as well as others in the uniform of Interior Ministry commandos (National Police units). These various elements assembled in Balad on the morning of 14 October and commenced to take control of Balad's streets, setting up checkpoints to control motor traffic.

By Tuesday (some 3 days later), the head of Balad city council, Malik Laftah, claimed that 'the Mahdi Army is controlling the town'.

But according to US and Iraqi government officials, it was government forces that were in control of Balad on Tuesday.

In fact, the three Mahdi elements that a spokesman described as heading to Balad to exact revenge are exactly the same three elements of the Iraqi state security forces that are present at every other government-sponsored cordon and search operation: army (normally holding the perimeter), police commandos (National Police) manning checkpoints and conducting house to house raids, plainclothes intelligence officers accompanying commandos*. It may be that additional irregular 'militia' elements were also involved, but the context remains categorically a security forces operation.

Interestingly, Ellen Knickmeyer wrote that the US QRF did not arrive in Balad until the end of 14 October (even this would leave glaring questions about the total failure to take any form of preventative or remedial action), but General Caldwell was very clear on this point:

We in fact did hear about the incident that did occur on the 13th there. We did despatch, based on the reports that occurred, a quick reaction force into the city to link up with and assist the local Iraqi security forces that were present at that time ... the first QRF force went into the city on the 13th.

General Caldwell also stated that if coalition (occupation) forces discovered persons or groups of persons operating outside the law, they would 'target' such persons or groups, 'irrespective of who they may or may not attribute some sort of membership to'. Should we assume that the US QRF and aerial surveillance assets simply missed the presence of the Mahdi Army (an illegal militia), who had set up roadblocks and taken control of the city, or must we conclude that the forces present in Balad were Iraqi state forces?

Two further pieces of circumstantial evidence support such a conclusion.

Firstly, some of the bodies that were eventually received at the Balad morgue bore electric drill holes, indicating that the victims had been detained against their will prior to death, ie had been arrested and taken to a detention

facility where they were tortured. This is consistent with one detailed account, in which a woman described how she and her husband were stopped at a checkpoint while attempting to flee the town. A hooded man identified her husband as a former army colonel; he was then beaten and taken away in a white sport-utility vehicle (ie a police vehicle) before being killed. These details are consistent with every other account of extrajudicial killings carried out by Interior Ministry personnel.

Secondly, the Kadhimiya district, where frightened Shiite elders looked for support, is not only home to an important Shiite shrine, but to one of the most important military/police bases (previously Camp Justice) in Baghdad, situated in a former intelligence facility. The base serves as the headquarters for one of the National Police divisions, formerly the Public Order Division. The National Police were expressly designed to be able to provide a strike force capability to the Interior Ministry, able to quickly deploy around the country to bolster local forces, in contrast to the Mahdi Army, which enjoys no formal backing, training or logistics and would be completely unable to deploy at short notice or to establish control over a large urban settlement.

Ultimately, it is the attested presence of US forces that demonstrates that this was a coordinated government operation and had nothing to do with any unauthorised militias.

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* For further examples of security force operations that have been attributed to sectarian violence, please see:

The Assault on Adhamiya - Not Civil War Yet
Operation Knockout in Diyala Demonstrates US Collusion with Death Squads
JIHAD KILLINGS IN BAGHDAD REQUIRE IMMEDIATE UN INVESTIGATION

Iraq: Security Companies and Training Camps

By **Sarah Meyer**
B*Russell*s Tribunal17 May 2006

Sarah Meyer articles and researches published by the B*Russell*s Tribunal.



FPS in Samawa, Iraq. Yahoo photo

Private US and UK security firms are closely allied to Mr. Bremer's 'Facilities Protection Service' programme in Iraq. Newsweek (24.04.06) suggested 146,000[1] belong to this 'security' force. The Interior Minister, Bayan Jabr, associated the FPS with the endemic 'death squads' operating inside the police forces, which are hastening the disintegration of Iraq[2].

What is the Facilities Protection Service?

The establishment of the 'Facilities Protection Service' was on 04.10.03, according to Paul Bremer's Coalition Provisional Authority Order Number 27 (see appendix one).

This document says that "*The FPS may also consist of employees of private security firms*[3] who are engaged to perform services for the ministries or governorates through contracts, provided such private security firms and employees are licensed and authorized by the Ministry of Interior as provided in Section 7 herein."

According to Global Security.org, "The Facilities Protection Service works for all ministries and governmental agencies, but its standards are set and enforced by the Ministry of the Interior. It can also be privately hired. The FPS is tasked with the fixed site protection of Ministerial, Governmental, or private buildings, facilities and personnel. The FPS includes Oil, Electricity Police and Port Security.

The majority of the FPS staff consists of former service members and former security guards. The FPS will now secure public facilities such as hospitals, banks, and power stations within their district. Once trained, the guards work with US military forces protecting critical sites like schools, hospitals and power plants."

Which private security firms are operating in Iraq?

There are about 30 known private security firms working in Iraq. These include:

Aegis PLC
Aegis is run by Lt. Col. Tim Spicer. A film recently showed Aegis members happily shooting Iraqi civilians. See the film here.

Sourcewatch information on Aegis: "Aegis Defence Services was initially awarded a $293 million

contract by the Pentagon in May 2004 to act as the 'coordination and management hub' for the fifty-plus private security companies in Iraq. As of December, 2005, that contract was worth in excess of $430 million. They also contributed seventy-five teams of eight armed civilians each to assist and protect the Project Management Office of the United States. They also provided protection for the Oil-for-Food Program inquiry."

Blackwater USA.
Blackwater was the security firm hired to protect Paul Bremer in Iraq.

Sourcewatch on Blackwater. "Blackwater is one of two companies which make up The Prince Group, the other being Prince Manufacturing. ... The Prince Group bought Aviation Worldwide Servies. AWS consists of STI Aviation, Inc., Air Quest, Inc., and Presidential Airways, Inc. These companies provide the logistical and air support for Blackwater operations. Blackwater itself consists of Blackwater Training Center, Blackwater Target Systems, Blackwater Security Consulting and Blackwater Canine."



Blackwater K9 dog

Whose dogs were used at Abu Ghraib - and are now being used at some training camps? Were these dogs from Blackwater K9?

Blackwater vs. Fallujah

The 1st Marine Expeditionary Force took over Fallujah on 27.03.04. During a demonstration on the 28th, the US killed 18 Fallujah civilians. The Iraqi response to this was the murder and hanging of 4 Blackwater employees on 31.03.04. War crimes committed by the United States followed. See:
Fallujah, the Hidden Nightmare (Rai/ICH)

Najaf was also affected. Sourcewatch says: "According to Russel Mokhiber and Robert Weissman, a few days after the Fallujah killings, "Blackwater Security Consulting engaged in full-scale battle in

Najaf, with the company flying its own helicopters amidst an intense firefight to re-supply its own commandos. ... The increased scrutiny of security firms led Blackwater to hire the Alexander Strategy Group (now involved in three "K Street" scandals) for crisis management, public and media relations."

For a shady story that gets progressively darker, see IRAQ: Blood is Thicker Than Blackwater

Erinys Iraq Ltd.
According to Global Security, "Erinys Iraq Ltd is the private security company hired to protect Iraq's oil pipelines under a US$40 million contract awarded in August 2003. Erinys Iraq is an affiliate of Erinys International formed in 2001, landed the Iraq contract to supply and train 6,500 armed guards charged with protecting 140 Iraqi oil wells, 7,000 kilometers of pipelines and refineries, as well as power plants and the water supply for the Iraqi Ministry of Oil. A majority of Erinys' workforce (15,000 Iraqi and 350 international staff) in Iraq are Kurdish peshmerga."

Sourcewatch information on Erinys. "Erinys Iraq Ltd, which won an $80 million contract last August from the Coalition Provisional Authority to provide security for the oil infrastructure in Iraq, has had some powerful alliances in Iraq.

Erinys set up a Joint Venture with Nour USA Ltd.. Nour's founder is Abul Huda Farouki, a wealthy Jordanian-American who lives in northern Virginia and whose companies have done extensive construction work for the Pentagon.

Farouki's businesses established $12 million of loans from the Petra International Banking Corporation in the 1980s, which was managed at the time by Ahmed Chalabi's nephew, Mohammed Chalabi. The Jordanian government says this was part of a massive embezzlement scheme involving Chalabi[4] and a bank he owned in Jordan.

A founding partner and the director of Erinys Iraq is Faisal Dhaghistani. Faisal is the son of Tamara Daghistani, who played a large role in the development of Ahmed Chalabi's Iraqi National Congress.

The firm's counsel in Baghdad has been Chalabi's nephew, Salem Chalabi.

Many among the 14,000 guards recruited by Erinys to protect the oil infrastructure came directly from the Iraqi Free Forces, a militia that had been loyal to Chalabi's movement."

Following is an up-to-date State Department list [5] of 27 further known security firms working in Iraq:

AD Consultancy (which firm?) (UK)

AKE Ltd (UK)

BAGHDAD FIRE AND SECURITY (IRAQ)

ARMOR GROUP (in Mosul, Baghdad, Basra) (UK)

CONTROL RISKS GROUP (Baghdad) (UK)

CUSTER BATTLES (now being investigated) (US)

DEHDARI GENERAL TRADING & CONTRACTING EST.(KUWAIT)

DILIGENCE MIDDLE EAST (US)

GENRIC (outside Basra) (UK)

GLOBAL MIDDLE EAST RISK STRATEGIES (originally a firm based in UK, known as Global Risk Strategies) (Dubai,UAE)

GROUP 4 FALCK A/S (INDIA)

HENDERSON RISK LTD (UK)

HILL AND ASSOCIATES (HONG KONG)

ICP (employees are only either former British and US Special Forces or Elite Forces personnel. (UK)

ISI (Baghdad Conference Palace: ("the only security company to provide 24 hour Iraqi security guards to the CPA "Green Zone". All guards are trained by the U.S. army ... ISI's senior management includes experienced military personnel mostly ex-special forces from both the US and UK.") (IRAQ)

METEORIC TACTICAL SOLUTIONS (S. AFRICA)

MEYER & ASSOCIATES, (TEXAS, US)

OLIVE SECURITY LTD (UK)

OPTIMAL SOLUTION SERVICES (AUSTRALIA)

OVERSEAS SECURITY AND STRATEGIC INFORMATION, INC/SAFENET-IRAQ (US)

RAMOPS RISK MANAGEMENT GROUP (comprised of US special operations and military intelligence professionals.) (US)

SOG-SMG INC. (US)

SUMER INTERNATIONAL SECURITY (trained by DYNCORP. INT; (IRAQ)

TOR INTERNATIONAL (former SAS and Special Forces staff) (UK)

TRIPLE CANOPY (more than 20 years in the most elite military Special Operations units) (US)

UNITY RESOURCES GROUP (Middle East) LLC. (security professionals drawn from the Special Forces and Police SWAT communities of the United States, United Kingdom, Australia, New Zealand

and Europe. (Dubai, UAE)
WADE-BOYD & ASSOCIATES (US)

Where is training for the Facilities Protection Service ("death squads"?) taking place?

• Basra Palace (UK)

"19/5 Battery: "Maj. A. J. Layden is responsible for the Facilities Protection Service (FPS). The Battery oversees a wide range of activities; from working with the border guards away to the east of Basra, to running training courses for the FPS. Sgt Duncan's multiple (sic) is one that has been tasked with this FPS training task. He and his team have already run four five-day courses which include foot drill, weapon handling, basic first aid and vehicle check point drills. The aim throughout each course is to raise confidence amongst the men of the FPS in basic standards and encourage good practice. At the end of each course, the top students have been selected to receive further instruction to educate them how to lead future courses. Sgt Duncan and his team are now reaping the rewards of their hard work with Iraqi FPS staff leading the most recent course under their guidance. " (There is no date on this communication.)

• Baghdad, Al Rashid district

Col. Jon Brockman said (21.01.04) "that those achievements include recruiting, training, equipping and employing 2,900 Iraqis as Facility Protection Services guards."

• MEK Compound / FOB Mercury / Camp Mercury

A photo tour of Camp Mercury can be seen here. The photo of the prisoner compound has been deleted.

Global Security says: "Forward Operating Base [FOB] Mercury is an abandoned Iraqi military base and a former Iranian terrorist training camp, located midway between Baghdad and Fallujah."

"TF 1-504 operates out of FOB Mercury. They are responsible for several towns west of Baghdad, including the external security of the largest prison and detention facility in Iraq. TF 1-504 recently started training Iraqi Facility Protection Service guards. This is a program to train and equip Iraqis so

they can begin guarding their own critical facilities, such as police stations, food warehouses, oil storage depots, etc. ... A class of twenty-five Iraqis completed the Facilities Protection Force (FPS) program 11 October 2003 at Forward Operating Base Mercury. The group of students is the first to participate in the three-day course. Upon their graduation, they became an integral part of the Iraq rehabilitation process. ..."

"There have been allegations made that between 2003-2004 at Camp Mercury U.S. military personnel engaged in routine and widespread physical punishment towards Iraqi detainees. It is alleged that enlisted men conducted beatings of prisoners prior to questioning, forced strenuous exercises to the point of unconsciousness and exposed detainees to extremes of heat and cold. These alleged methods were employed to produce greater cooperation with interrogators some of whom were apparently members of the CIA. As of September 2005 the U.S. Army was conducting an investigation on what exactly happened at Camp Mercury. Some military personnel also claim that these actions were also used as a form of stress relief from the war."

• An Najaf

An Najaf area, two hundred one facility protection service guards graduated from security training on 03 July 2003. Sixty-seven guards will work at oil and gas facilities and 134 will work at hospitals. On 29.08.03, the mosque in Najaf was bombed.

The 11th MEU commander declared Nov. 30 (04) that Iraqi security forces have formally assumed local control of An Najaf province. Col. Anthony Haslam said, "In the past three months, they have demonstrated their ability to keep this province and its citizens safe and secure." As of 09.12.05, The Iraqi army had the primary responsibility for security in Najaf and Karbala, but full control had not yet been handed over.

06.14.06. Car bombing. 10 people killed near Shi'ite Muslim shrine.

Further Najaf security matters can be seen here.

• AR RAMADI

• KARBALA

There is no further detailed information about where the FPS members are being trained. There is,

however, further information about Training Camps for Iraqis. For example, see the description of Camp David, where Special Weapons and Tactics (SWAT), emergency response, and dignitary protection, similar to functions carried out by the U.S. Secret service, take place. Black masks are 'de rigour' (see photo). These camps will be detailed in my research on US bases in North/South/East/West Iraq.

APPENDIX ONE: PAUL BREMER'S ORDER NUMBER 27:

ESTABLISHMENT OF THE FACILITIES PROTECTION SERVICE

... The FPS is an organization of trained, armed, uniformed entities charged with providing security for ministry and governorate offices, government infrastructure, and fixed sites under the direction and control of governmental ministries and governorate administrations.

Section 2: Organization of the FPS

1) Governmental employees employed by the ministries or governorates are eligible to serve in the FPS. *The FPS may also consist of employees of private security firms* who are engaged to perform services for the ministries or governorates through contracts, provided such private security firms and employees are licensed and authorized by the Ministry of Interior as provided in Section 7 herein. Persons who have participated in Ba`ath Party activity within the leadership tiers described in CPA Order Number 1, De-Ba`athification of Iraqi Society (CPA/ORD/16 May 2003/01) may not serve in the FPS in any capacity except by the express grant of an exception by the Coalition Provisional Authority.

2) Ministers and heads of governorate administrations shall determine the need for FPS members at locations under their supervision. Each ministry or governorate administration is responsible for ensuring the FPS branch under its supervision is sufficient to protect key sites for which it is responsible, with the additional support of police or other forces in times of emergency.

3) Ministries and governorate administrations are responsible for the funding of FPS members assigned to their agency. Ministries and governorate administrations are responsible for the supervision and control of the FPS force assigned to their governmental agency, consistent with the

standards and regulations established by the Ministry of Interior.

4) Governorates will establish Regional Operations Centers to coordinate the operations of FPS guards and to ensure their proper integration with police and other emergency services.

5) The Ministry of Interior will establish standards and training for the FPS including standards and training for private security firms performing FPS duties pursuant to contracts.

Pursuant to this Order, the Ministry of Interior will issue FPS
Administrative Instructions defining the standards for dress, training, certification, and deportment. All members of the FPS whether contracted or employed directly by the governmental agency are required to comply with the Administrative Instructions issued by the Ministry of Interior.

6) FPS organizations may be known by different names including, for example "Electricity Police," "Diplomatic Protective Services," or "Oil Police" but each will have only the specific powers and authorities granted in this Order.

7) Members of the FPS may not participate in any manner in organizations or activities that advocate racial, gender or ethnic hatred or intolerance; advocate, create, or engage in illegal discrimination based on race, color, gender, religion, or regional origin; or use, or advocate the use of, force or violence or other unlawful means to achieve internal political goals. Violations may result in the removal of the member from employment in the FPS or the withdrawal of the authorization for the member to perform FPS responsibilities as a member of a private security firm.

Section 3: Authority of the FPS

1) Members of the FPS may, while performing their official duties, apprehend persons who (i) they witness committing or attempting to commit a criminal offense, (ii) have escaped after being lawfully arrested, or (iii) otherwise interfere with their lawful activities. Persons apprehended by the FPS must be turned over to the Iraqi police or Coalition Forces within twelve hours of apprehension or be released.

2) Members of the FPS may, while performing their official duties, conduct reasonable searches for weapons or other dangerous or prohibited items of persons entering or within the governmental

property or offices they are securing, criminal suspects in their custody, or vehicles entering or within the governmental property or offices they are securing.

3) Members of the FPS may, while performing official duties, use force against persons or things as is reasonable and necessary under the circumstances. However, the use of force that may be likely to cause death or serious bodily injury is not permitted *unless the member reasonably believes that using such force is necessary* to: (i) protect himself or others from the imminent use of deadly force or force likely to cause serious bodily injury, (ii) prevent the escape of a person suspected of committing murder or assault resulting in serious bodily injury, or (iii) defend ministry or governorate offices, government or state-owned infrastructure, and fixed sites under the direction and control of governmental ministries and governorate administrations, to prevent their destruction or incapacitation.

Section 4: Jurisdiction

1) Members of the FPS will be subject to Iraqi law at all times, and the courts of Iraq shall have jurisdiction over offenses alleged to have been committed by members of the FPS. The Administrator of the CPA may determine that offenses alleged to have been committed by members of the FPS while on duty may be submitted to the Central Criminal Court of Iraq in accordance with CPA Order Number 13 (Revised), The Central Criminal Court of Iraq (CPA/ORD/13 July 2003/13).

2) Members of the FPS shall *enjoy immunity from civil liability for acts or omissions arising within the scope of their duties* and in the conduct of authorized operations to the same degree as other governmental officials under the law of Iraq.

Section 5: Weapons
The possession of weapons by members of the FPS is regulated by CPA Order Number 3, Weapons Control Order (CPA/ORD/23 May 2003/03).

CPA/ORD/4 September 2003 / 27

Comments

The UK was criticized for starting the Basra turmoil in 10.05. Two SAS, part of a 24-member team,

were discovered with explosives in the back of their car. They were dressed in Arab clothing. See Basra Shadowlands.

"Majid al-Sari, an adviser to the Iraqi Ministry of Defence, describing the situation in Basra to the daily al-Zaman, said that on average one person (in Basra) was being assassinated every hour ... The governor of Basra, Mohammed Misbahal-Wa'ili, is trying to sack the city's police chief, claiming that the police have not carried out a single investigation into hundreds of recent assassinations," according to Patrick Cockburn (17.05.06) in The Independent

On March, 06, a security contractor in Tikrit was arrested with a "Do It Yourself Car Bomb Kit" in his BMW. What was he going to blow up? Was this going to be a "suicide bombing?" How many 'suicide bombings' are actually caused by 'security' mercenaries, ordered to do so by the US/UK government?

Headline (05.06). "Baghdad: American security contractors shot dead an Iraqi ambulance crewman on Tuesday when they opened fire on his vehicle after a roadside bomb blasted their convoy." Which security firm did this? According to the Geneva Convention, it is a war crime to kill ambulance crew members.

Hospitals, as well as ambulances, have been bombed (also against the Geneva Convention). The excuse given is that they 'harbour terrorists.'

Brig. Gen. Mark Kimmitt defended raiding al Tabul mosque in 01.04 because, he said, "Iraqi citizens had identified it as a hub of insurgency operations." One has to extend this excuse, and ask, 'Are mosques also bombed by security forces because they 'harbour terrorists?' Such charges have been made.

The Khadamiya shrine, according to Newsweek (24.04.06) is guarded by the FPS. "Not one ministry contacted by Newsweek would accept overall responsibility for the FPS." If Bremer created the FPS, then isn't the coalition is responsible for the FPS?

No prosecution? Bremer's Order 27 exempts security contractors as well as the Facilities Protection Service: "Members of the FPS shall *enjoy immunity from civil liability for acts or omissions arising within the scope of their duties*."

How many Security (sic) people are there in total? How many of these belong now, or have belonged in the past, to the Special Forces / SAS? How many have put Car Bomb Kits in the back of their car? How many have carried out assassinations? How many 'Kill For Fun' (like Aegis)?

Are any of these 'security' people responsible for the 190 academic and 225 health worker assassinations? See http://www.brusselstribunal.org for details of these assassinations.

Is the increase in number of security companies / FPS directly related to / *causing* the increase of violence in Iraq?

Related Sites:

Negroponte supports FPS.
Wolfovitz supports FPS.
Rumsfeld (22.10.03) supports the FPS.
President Bush, in a 07.09.03 speech in which he talks about an Iraq "free of assassins, and torturers, and secret police," supports the FPS.

The most important articles, with excellent links, are by Max Fuller:
For Iraq, "The Salvador Option" Becomes Reality
Crying Wolf: Media Disinformation and Death Squads in Occupied Iraq.
Video with annotated scene selection and selected links: Crying Wolf: Who is behind the death squads in Iraq?

And, additionally, articles by William Bowles:
Private Military Contractors – A $300 Billion Dollar Business (18.05.03)
Corporate Media Discovers Private Military Contractors (29.03.04)
The Curious Case of Tim Spicer, Tony Blair's Pet Bulldog (18.08.04)

The Privatization of War by Niloufer Bhagwat (29.06.05)

Footnotes

[1] Throughout this article you will notice a variation of given numbers, dependent on the source.

However, these numbers are not unbearably far apart.

[2] The jumping off point for this research was E. Knickmeyer's *Washington Post story* Iraq Nears Consolidation of Paramilitary Unit (11.05.06) and Iraq Begins to Rein In Paramilitary Force (14.05.06)

[3] All italics in this article are the author's.

[4] Chalabi was one of the 1998 PNAC signatories to a letter to President Clinton, calling for regime change in Iraq.

[5] The Embassy of the United States – Iraq also has a website for Security Companies in Iraq, with websites, emails, details.

The url to Iraq: Security Companies and Training Camps is:

http://www.brusselstribunal.org/SecurityCompanies.htm

http://indexresearch.blogspot.com/2006/05/iraq-security-companies-and-training.html

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Dear friends,

underneath is a very interesting article of today's Washington Post about involvement of **Facilities Protection Service** (FPS) in Death Squads operations. The 17th of May, Sarah Meyer has written extensively about this FPS. The article was first published by the B*Russell*s Tribunal and on Sarah's weblog: http://indexresearch.blogspot.com/2006/05/iraq-security-companies-and-training.html . It seems the FPS is Donald Rumsfeld's baby.

We have to watch carefully this development. Who is really behind the death squads? Seems that it is the US/UK military. This sheds a new light on the so-called Civil war in Iraq.

What is the Facilities Protection Service?

The establishment of the 'Facilities Protection Service' was on 04.10.03, according to Paul Bremer's Coalition Provisional Authority Order Number 27 (see appendix one).

This document says that "*The FPS may also consist of employees of private security firms*[3] who are engaged to perform services for the ministries or governorates through contracts, provided such private security firms and employees are licensed and authorized by the Ministry of Interior as provided in Section 7 herein."

According to Global Security.org, "The Facilities Protection Service works for all ministries and governmental agencies, but its standards are set and enforced by the Ministry of the Interior. It can

also be privately hired. The FPS is tasked with the fixed site protection of Ministerial, Governmental, or private buildings, facilities and personnel. The FPS includes Oil, Electricity Police and Port Security.

The majority of the FPS staff consists of former service members and former security guards. The FPS will now secure public facilities such as hospitals, banks, and power stations within their district. Once trained, the guards work with US military forces protecting critical sites like schools, hospitals and power plants."

Further reading of Sarah Meyer's splendid article:
http://www.brusselstribunal.org/SecurityCompanies.htm

Dirk Adriaensens.
Member B*Russell*s Tribunal executive committee.
Coordinator SOS Iraq.

Official: Guard Force Is Behind Death Squads
By Ellen Knickmeyer
Washington Post Foreign Service
Saturday, October 14, 2006; A18

BAGHDAD, Oct. 13 -- Iraq's interior minister on Friday rejected allegations that Iraq's police and military have played a major role in the death squads blamed for Baghdad's surging violence, saying that only a small number of all those caught in U.S. or Iraqi raids were members of the police or army.

Jawad al-Bolani, speaking to a small group of reporters in Baghdad, blamed the Facilities Protection Service, or FPS, a massive but unregulated government guard force whose numbers he put at about 150,000.

"Whenever we capture someone, we rarely find anyone is an employee of the government ministries," Bolani said. When they are, "they've turned out to be mostly from the FPS, with very few individual, actual incidents involving anyone from the Ministry of Interior or Ministry of Defense."

Since midsummer, Shiite-Sunni violence has escalated in Baghdad, with the Health Ministry last month reporting that the number of monthly killings here had roughly doubled since spring, to 2,600. Most of the victims had been shot and their bodies dumped in the streets, often handcuffed, blindfolded and showing signs of torture.

Many victims are Sunni Arabs. Sunnis and some U.S. officials charge that Shiite Muslim militias, sometimes operating inside the mainly Shiite police forces, are responsible for much of the killing. Victims of Baghdad's violence are often taken away by men in police uniforms, and sometimes in police vehicles, and later found dead.

Bolani and his predecessor as interior minister, Bayan Jabr, both have minimized the possibility of any police involvement in the nightly killings. "We are experiencing a problem of impressions" regarding a police role in killings and militia infiltration of police, Bolani said Friday.

American generals were among the first to publicly express suspicion that the Facilities Protection Service was playing a key role in the growing sectarian killings. U.S. commanders themselves started the agency soon after the 2003 U.S-led invasion, intending it to be a force of a few thousand men who would guard buildings against looting.

The service today has grown to a size rivaling that of the U.S. force in Iraq, although control of the service's men is split among the various ministries they are nominally assigned to guard. Most wear uniforms similar or identical to those of the police.

Bolani also said bodyguard units assigned to unspecified officials were carrying out some of the killings.

Bolani, like Jabr, has repeatedly suggested that killings by gunmen in police uniforms were being carried out by impostors. On Friday, he repeated promises made since early this year that police would soon be issued uniforms and vehicles that would be difficult to duplicate.

Bolani also said police forces are trying to reform themselves, such as by retraining men and requiring loyalty oaths. He said major changes were needed at the command level of the Interior Ministry itself and that he had the backing of the government to make them.

Iraq's government, led by the Shiite religious parties that also lead the militias, has shown little willingness to confront them.

Interior Ministry officials were serious about purging "corrupt elements" and had fired about 3,000 employees for that reason, Bolani said. Aides said 1,228 of those employees had been subjected to administrative punishment, and Bolani said 10 to 20 percent of the 3,000 had been referred for possible prosecution. He declined to immediately give examples of infractions or name those punished.

Bolani, an independent allied to the coalition of governing Shiite religious parties, also said three of the country's biggest militias -- those of the country's two main Kurdish parties and that of a leading Shiite religious party, the Supreme Council for the Islamic Revolution in Iraq -- were among those that had been lawfully integrated into the country's security forces.

He said that a fourth major militia, the Mahdi Army of Shiite cleric Moqtada al-Sadr, along with Sunni insurgent groups, were "outside the political body and structure."

"We do not approve of the existence of these militias," Bolani said of the Mahdi Army and Sunni insurgents.

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B- Other Resources.





Census: 100,000 contractors in Iraq

Number is 10 times that in first Gulf War, far more than previous estimate
By Renae Merle
The Washington Post
Dec. 5, 2006
There are about 100,000 government contractors operating in Iraq, not counting subcontractors, a total that is approaching the size of the U.S. military force there, according to the military's first census of the growing population of civilians operating in the battlefield.

The survey finding, which includes Americans, Iraqis and third-party nationals hired by companies operating under U.S. government contracts, is significantly higher and wider in scope than the Pentagon's only previous estimate, which said there were 25,000 security contractors in the country.

It is also 10 times the estimated number of contractors that deployed during the Persian Gulf War in 1991, reflecting the Pentagon's growing post-Cold War reliance on contractors for such jobs as providing security, interrogating prisoners, cooking meals, fixing equipment and constructing bases that were once reserved for soldiers.

Official numbers are difficult to find, said Deborah D. Avant, author of the 2005 book "The Market for Force: The Consequences of Privatizing Security," but an estimated 9,200 contractors deployed during the Gulf War, a far shorter conflict without reconstruction projects. "This is the largest deployment of U.S. contractors in a military operation," said Avant, an associate professor at George Washington University.

In addition to about 140,000 U.S. troops, Iraq is now filled with a hodgepodge of contractors. DynCorp International has about 1,500 employees in Iraq, including about 700 helping train the police force. Blackwater USA has more than 1,000 employees in the country, most of them providing private security. Kellogg, Brown and Root, one of the largest contractors in Iraq, said it does not delineate its workforce by country but that it has more than 50,000 employees and subcontractors working in Iraq, Afghanistan and Kuwait. MPRI, a unit of L-3 Communications, has about 500 employees working on 12 contracts, including providing mentors to the Iraqi Defense Ministry for strategic planning, budgeting and establishing its public affairs office. Titan, another L-3 division, has 6,500 linguists in the country.

The Pentagon's latest estimate "further demonstrates the need for Congress to finally engage in responsible, serious and aggressive oversight over the questionable and growing U.S. practice of private military contracting," said Rep. Janice D. Schakowsky (D-Ill.), who has been critical of the military's reliance on contractors.

Labor Department: About 650 have died

About 650 contractors have died in Iraq since 2003, according to Labor Department statistics.

Central Command, which conducted the census, said a breakdown by nationality or job description was not immediately available because the project is still in its early stages. "This is the first time we have initiated a census of this robustness," Lt. Col. Julie Wittkoff, chief of the contracting branch at Central Command, said in an interview. Those figures do not include subcontractors, which could substantially grow the figure.

In June, government agencies were asked to provide data about contractors working for them in Iraq, including their nationality, a description of their work and locations where they were working. The information was provided by more than a dozen entities within the Pentagon and a dozen outside agencies, including the departments of State and Interior, Wittkoff said. The count increased about 15 percent from about 87,000 since Central Command began keeping a tally this summer, she said, though the increase may reflect ongoing data collection efforts. The census will be updated quarterly, Wittkoff said.

Need for coordination

Three years into the war, the headcount represents one of the Pentagon's most concrete efforts so far toward addressing the complexities and questions raised by the large numbers of civilians who have flooded into Iraq to work. With few industry standards, the military and contractors have sometimes lacked coordination, resulting in friendly fire incidents, according to a Government Accountability Office report last year.

"It takes a great deal of vigilance on the part of the military commander to ensure contractor compliance," said William L. Nash, a retired Army general and a senior fellow at the Council on Foreign Relations. "If you're trying to win hearts and minds and the contractor is driving 90 miles per hour through the streets and running over kids, that's not helping the image of the American army. The Iraqis aren't going to distinguish between a contractor and a soldier."

The census gives military commanders insight into the contractors operating in their region and the type of work they are doing, Wittkoff said. "It helps the combatant commanders have a better idea of . . . food and medical requirements they may need to provide to support the contractors," she said.

Staff writer Griff Witte contributed to this report. © 2006 The Washington Post Company

URL: http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/16047618/from/RSS/

http://www.brusselstribunal.org/SecurityCompanies.htm

CIA death squads operating in Iraq

By Henry Michaels

8 April 2003

The longer the Iraq war continues, the more Orwellian the language and the more sinister the methods adopted by the Bush administration and its allies. While President Bush and his officials depict Iraqis resisting the US-led invasion as “terrorists” and “death squads,” CIA and Special Forces assassination squads are at work in Iraq, seeking to eliminate Iraqi leaders and other opponents of the US occupation of the country.

In the language of the White House and Pentagon, the thousands of Iraqi citizens in plainclothes—whether ordinary people, militia members or soldiers—who are resisting the invading forces in any way they can, are “war criminals.” But the undercover US hit squads and other military-intelligence operatives roaming throughout Iraq in civilian clothes, terrorizing the population, are “heroes” in the cause of democracy and liberation.

While the Western media has largely blacked coverage of the US killers, one report in the Canadian *National Post* last week briefly mentioned the presence of special operations troops in civilian clothes

as US Marines reached southern Baghdad. “Special forces were also out in large numbers in their distinctive fighting gear, which includes baseball caps, jeans, expensive sunglasses and specially adapted rifles,” it noted.

There is a fundamental difference between the Iraqis who are defending their country and the US, British and Australian special operations units that are operating secretly, often in civilian disguise. Whereas the Iraqis are legitimately targeting Allied military personnel for ambushes, sniper fire and surprise bombings, the US-led squads are illegally hunting down civilians and government figures, sabotaging civilian facilities and arming selected local thugs to execute reprisals, flouting the international laws of war.

In the face of widespread popular resistance, these “unconventional warfare” operations are escalating, but they have been under way for many months. Well before Bush formally declared war on Iraq, US intelligence and military operatives were in Baghdad and throughout Iraq, aiming to locate and kill Saddam Hussein and other leaders. British and Australian Special Air Services (SAS) commandos were also active in the west and north of Iraq.

Citing intelligence sources, United Press International reported last week that the unsuccessful bombing operation to murder Saddam Hussein and his family and cabinet ministers on March 20 was preceded by intensive infiltration of CIA agents into Baghdad, the recruitment of Iraqi spies and the insertion of special operations troops into the capital.

According to UPI: “The March 20 operation involved more than 300 Special Forces, who moved into the country to join Delta troops and CIA paramilitaries, these sources said. One former long-time CIA operative said it was the Delta men, already in the country, who made the breakthrough for the US attack by infiltrating a key Baghdad telecommunications center and tapping a fiber optic telephone line.
“It was this that enabled the US clandestine team to locate Saddam and top leaders at Dora Farm, an Iraqi command and control complex and a legitimate war target, US officials said. Iraqi assets [spies], recruited by the agency, played a key part in the operation by providing ‘priceless’ information, relating to the phone system and details of Dora Farm, according to one former senior CIA official.”

Having failed to “decapitate” the Iraqi government, such operations nevertheless remain one of Washington’s top objectives. UPI reported: “CIA paramilitary teams, working with Delta Forces, still are inside Iraq, attempting to kill 30 top Iraqi leaders, including Saddam’s other son, Uday, who commands the Iraqi Fedayeen, several US sources said. One administration official confirmed that US intelligence has the names, addresses and cell phone numbers of the 30 targets.”

Last Wednesday, acting on CIA information, a helicopter formation raided the Tharthar Palace, one of many residences allegedly used by Hussein and his sons, about 55 miles outside Baghdad.
Reporting on the "unseen" war in Iraq conducted by teams of CIA paramilitary and Special Forces operatives, the *Christian Science Monitor* quoted retired US Brigadier General John Reppert: "That is certainly the strategy now. And decapitation as a strategy works well beyond Saddam Hussein. It takes in his Revolutionary Council, leaders of his Baath Party, and below that, the four divisions of the Republican Guard plus the one Special Republican Guard unit."

As these comments suggest, the special forces' targets extend well beyond the Iraqi leadership. An on-the-spot-report from the city of Najaf published by the London-based *Financial Times* on April 5 provided a glimpse of the methods being employed in urban areas:
"The people of Najaf were introduced to their new government this week—a virtually unknown opposition group that claims to represent all Iraqis, cruises around the streets on US special forces vehicles, and is doing its best to present itself as part of a spontaneous 'intifada' against the Iraqi regime."

Members of the group, called the Iraqi Coalition for National Unity (ICNU), "rarely stray from their US vehicles and special forces minders, grinning broadly for cameras from atop Humvees and raising their weapons in victory.... Co-ordination between ICNU and US ground forces in Najaf is tight, handled by special forces and CIA operatives."

Nevertheless, the newspaper reported, the ICNU and its sponsors had failed to subdue the city, which hosts Shia Muslim holy sites. US troops patrolled during the day but withdrew at night, looting by hungry crowds was commonplace, and Shia religious leaders had refused to negotiate directly with US commanders, regarding them as an occupying force.

Elsewhere, including in the northern Kurdish areas, allied operatives are financing and arming tribal leaders, ethnic militias and local thugs, employing similar techniques to Afghanistan, where the CIA paid millions of dollars to regional warlords to fight against the Taliban regime. "I'm sure we've got guys with 80-pound rucksacks full of $100 bills,'' a former CIA station chief told the *Los Angeles Times*. "I'm sure we're buying up some folks.''

Well before the war began, huge payments were channeled through networks of Iraqi agents recruited by the CIA and MI6, the British spy agency, to encourage uprisings against the Iraqi government. Up until now, however, these efforts have not borne fruit.

Revealing cover-up at Pentagon briefing

At an April 4 Pentagon media briefing, Army Major General Stanley McChrystal boasted that the contribution of special forces to the US operation had been "unprecedented." Another senior official, speaking on condition of anonymity, said more than 10,000 special operations troops were involved in Iraq—the largest number for any US war since Vietnam.

There was a revealing exchange when a journalist asked the following question:
"Can you help us to understand one of the points—one of the arguments made by the administration on the 'war criminals' tag? Obviously, the administration has seen a number of irregular practices on the part of the Iraqis. One of them in particular puzzles me. When they take off their uniforms and fight in civilian clothes, why is that a war crime? Because US Special Forces do it and did it in Afghanistan—they didn't behave in the same way, but why is the act of fighting without a uniform considered a war crime?"

McChrystal could not answer the question, becoming flummoxed as he tried unsuccessfully to draw a distinction between the tasks being performed by US personnel and Iraqi civilians. Victoria Clarke, spokeswoman for Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld, quickly stepped in to shut down the line of questioning.
"I'd actually like to take that question, because I don't think you're right about that," she told the journalist. After a pause, Clarke said the Pentagon would respond later.
Another journalist asked if US forces were under any "special instructions" if they found Saddam Hussein or other senior Iraqi leader. Clarke immediately told McChrystal, "You don't need to answer his question."
After the press conference, officials said US special forces in Iraq "are wearing uniforms," but declined to say if they were full uniforms or modified. Clarke's abrupt intervention at the briefing suggests acute awareness in the administration that its officials and military commanders are the ones committing war crimes in Iraq.

The methods being used in Iraq will soon become as notorious as the CIA-backed coup in Iran in 1953 to install the cruel regime of the Shah, the "Operation Phoenix" killing program in Vietnam, and the 1973 overthrow of the Allende government in Chile, to name but a few of US imperialism's crimes.
http://www.wsws.org/articles/2003/apr2003/cia-a08_prn.shtml



Rule of the death squads

Iraq one year on - The shooting isn't just between occupying forces and guerrillas. The Iraqi Governing Council is "killing people one by one"

Stephen Grey

Monday 15th March 2004 "New Statesman" - On the morning of his death, 19 January 2004, Professor Abdullatif Ali al-Mayah left his house as he always did at 8am. Placing his Samsonite briefcase on the back seat, he took the wheel of his metallic-blue 4x4, a Hyundai Galloper II. Another professor, Sarhan Abbas, who lived in the same compound of university-owned bungalows, took the passenger seat.

Al-Mayah drove down the main road, past shops and an empty plot of rubbish-strewn land. Just before a side road leading to a motorway, the road swings to the left and he slowed down. As people do in Baghdad, he continued driving against the oncoming traffic. Staff at El Banouk (The Bank), an outdoor shish kebab restaurant, were just getting ready to open.

About a hundred metres farther on, al-Mayah was forced by a large pothole to slow again, and his attackers sprung their trap. Mohamed, who works in the restaurant, told me later: "I heard all the shots and looked out on to the road. I thought it was looters who wanted to steal his car."

Al-Mayah, 54, was a prominent human rights campaigner and an opponent of the American and British occupation of Iraq. Just 12 hours earlier, on al-Jazeera TV, he had denounced the corruption of the US-appointed Iraqi Governing Council (IGC) and demanded universal elections as soon as possible. "I can endure any Iraqi government," he said, "but the feeling of being under occupation is

terrible for me."

His friend Abbas recalled how he died. "Suddenly, a group of seven or eight men with their faces concealed appeared from a side road. Thinking they were carjackers, he was ready to hand them the keys. Then the attackers shot al-Mayah more than 20 times." Like other university staff, al-Mayah had been issued with a revolver for his protection, but he had little idea what to do with it. As a senior director, he was also given a bodyguard, who was in the car that morning. But Mohamed Sahib, 25, said he was waiting for an American licence to carry a gun and could do little to protect his boss.

Sahib remembered how the attackers, all in red keffiyehs (headscarves), with only their dark eyes visible through slits, approached from two sides. "They shouted for the car to stop . . . I remember one person fired directly at al-Mayah inside the car and I think another group also fired from the other side. He was shot three times in his head just as he was opening the car door to get out. He fell dead on to the ground."

There are many such deaths in Baghdad every day: al-Mayah, director of the Baghdad Centre for Human Rights, was the fourth Mustansiriya University professor to be slain. His murder has never been properly investigated by detectives; it was left to amateurs such as myself to interview witnesses and sift through the dirt to find the shell casings of his assassins' bullets.

Al-Mayah was not a victim of the struggle between "occupying forces" and the "resistance". He was crushed as a liberal force that stood between those positions. Not everyone gets this point. A New York Times article about the same murder implied that anti-US forces were responsible. It quoted the coalition's military spokesman, Brigadier General Mark Kimmitt, saying: "By silencing urban professionals, the guerrillas are waging war on Iraq's fledgling institutions and on progress itself. This works against everything we're trying to do here." But typically, even for a "liberal" American paper, the Times underplayed al-Mayah's determined opposition to US occupation. It seems unlikely he was a target for the "resistance", even though he supported calls for the elections that many Sunni guerrillas fear.

So who was responsible for his murder? A senior commander at the headquarters of the new American-installed Iraqi police told me: "Dr Abdullatif was becoming more and more popular because he spoke for people on the street here. He made some politicians quite jealous." But, he said, al-Mayah's killing was just like the seven other political assassinations carried out in the previous four weeks in the same small district. All remained unsolved. Then the leather-clad commander, tightly gripping his new Motorola police radio, looked at me sternly and demanded that his name never be printed.

He had a strong suspicion about who was behind most of these killings, he said. "You can look no further than the Governing Council. There are political parties in this city who are systematically killing people. They are politicians that are backed by the Americans and who arrived to Iraq from exile with a list of their enemies. I've seen these lists. They are killing people one by one."

Born in Basra, al-Mayah had spent most of his life as a poorly paid academic, teaching the politics of the Arab region. He became director of the university's Arab Homeland Studies Centre. "He had no money at all," said one of his brothers. "He had no house that he owned. In his martyrdom, he leaves behind just a pen and his writing." Al-Mayah had once been a member of Saddam Hussein's Ba'ath Party, though at a very junior level. According to Dr Talal Nathan al-Zuhary, director of the university library, al-Mayah quit the party in 1991 after seeing the reality of Saddam's regime. He was jailed in 1996 when he called for elections. He managed to escape the secret police because one of his former students was an interrogator.

"He believed in the original Ba'ath ideal of Arab unity," said al-Zuhary, "but he saw how hypocritical the regimes were, and so he wanted no connection to the party any more. After the recent American invasion, he was against both occupation and against dictatorship. He used to tell me that one day he would be bumped off by the Mossad or the CIA, although I never took that very seriously. More recently, he was more worried about the looters who came after the regime fell and stole so much. He was always telling me to watch out for my safety."

Others in Baghdad confirmed the police commander's story. In what might be called "death by Google", the names of some quite moderate figures, only tenuously connected with the old regime, appear on internet lists as Saddam supporters. Preventing the purges of such people is not a priority for US and British forces. As one British officer told me: "There is a kind of de-Ba'athification going on, a violent one, but it will come to its own natural conclusion."

Al-Mayah's brother said the professor had received many e-mails advising him to be less outspoken in his criticism of the IGC. At least one came from an IGC member. "He never told me the name of this man, only that he was a dual national, someone who had come back from exile after the Americans invaded. He told me the man never actually threatened him. It was a sort of warning that it would be safer if he left the country. He was determined not to be swayed."

The list of murder suspects is long. Some of the exiles who have returned from London, Washington or Tehran are armed to the teeth. Among the abandoned villas of former Mukhabarat (intelligence service) generals, which are now occupied by the "new" politicians, I've met some who clear heaps of revolvers from their breakfast tables as though they were used coffee mugs.



Many are quite shameless in their threats. Last December, in a sermon in the southern city of Najaf, Sadr al-Din al-Kobanchi, a senior Shia cleric and member of the Supreme Council for Islamic Revolution in Iraq, which holds power on the IGC, was categoric: "The Ba'ath Party is against God and the Prophet." He told former regime loyalists: "Leave your jobs at the ministries and institutions and companies - or all the workers will kill you by their own hands."

The militias that kill so professionally in Baghdad also flourish in southern Iraq in areas, mainly Shia, which US and British troops regard as safer. Under the noses of the occupying forces, the militias enforce their own kind of law and order. In Basra, they helped to re-establish order when the Ba'athists fled. Now, with a strong influence over the new, British-trained police forces, they continue to eliminate not only political opponents but also those, such as alcohol sellers, who violate what they regard as Islamic law.

Wahed, whose 25-year-old brother, Mohamed, a junior Ba'athist, has disappeared into the hands of the political militias, said the new world of Iraq is a confusing and unjust one. "In the old days, you knew who was running this country. I would have gone to the Ba'ath Party to argue for the release of my brother. Now there are so many different forces, parties and police forces at work; they are all armed and powerful, and how should I know which of them has kidnapped my brother?"

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http://www.informationclearinghouse.info/article5841.htm

Iraq's Democracy: The El Salvador Model

By Ghali Hassan

12/10/04 "ICH" -- The Bush administration is preparing Iraq for "democratic elections". The aims are to consolidate the Occupation, "legitimise" those who serve US interests in Iraq, and hence prolong the suffering of the Iraqi people. The Central American nation of El Salvador has been chosen as the best model of 'democracy' to be implemented in Iraq.

It seems that the Bush administration is in a dilemma trying to find a Vichy regime to install in Iraq. In 1940, in Nazi-occupied France, German leaders were able to create a regime that was acceptable to many French. By contrast, in Iraq no one seems to be able to fulfil the criteria of France's General Philippe Pétain, and provides an Arab "façade" for the Bush administration.

It was assumed that the best regime that could form the façade in Baghdad is the current US-appointed Iraqi Interim Government (IIG). However, this is not the case. The Allawi's "government" is far less popular among Iraqis than the regime of Saddam, and Allawi is the most hated individual in Iraq today. Iraqis see all members of the IIG as collaborator with the Occupation against Iraq interests. Most of them spent decades outside the country and hold no loyalty to Iraq.

The core of the IIG are: The Allawi's group of exiles (INA), the Chalebi's group of exiles (INC), the Peshmergas of the two Kurdish parties, and the Badir Brigade (Supreme Council for Islamic Revolution in Iraq, SCIRI), mostly of Iranian origins. Furthermore, each group has its own mafia-style death squad, and links to the CIA or the Israeli Mossad agents. As I wrote earlier, since they entered Iraq with the US invasion, the four groups have taken the law into their own hands and have killed many innocent Iraqis, including hundreds of Iraqi scientists and community leaders. The Occupation authority has never investigated their crimes. They entered Iraq on the backs of US tanks. Their relations with the Occupation are fully symbiotic relations. They co-exist in a mutually beneficial relationship with their US master. They are participating in the upcoming elections, because they want the Occupation to continue.

In 2003, UN own findings have shown that Iraqis accept free elections under UN control, and that US troops be replaced by UN troops from neutral nations. The US and its "coalition of the willing" were able to hold elections six months after the invasion, but they refused because they were not interested in a democratic outcome that could end of the Occupation. UN officials and Iraqi officials argued at that time that elections were feasible and possible within six months, but they were intentionally dismissed by the US. The Bush administration "stifled, delayed, manipulated and otherwise thwarted the democratic aspiration of the Iraqi people".

It is not possible to hold free elections under martial law and illegal foreign Occupation. Most Iraqis view the upcoming elections as a US fig leaf to consolidate the Occupation. The process is very untransparent. According to Dahr Jamail of The New Standard, Iraqis are saying: "The Americans won't allow a legitimate election in their own country, so why would they have one here"! As it stands, Iraqis do not put great hope on these fake elections, because the outcome of these elections is a forgone conclusion. The Bush administration is relying on sectarian forces in order to create a dependent Iraq and role it indefinitely.

The upcoming elections are not for the sake of establishing democracy in Iraq; they are being prepared to add another fake legitimacy to the US Occupation and marginalize the Iraqi people. In fact, elections are very minor thing of democracy. Democracy is a collection of institutions that govern an entire nation, and the purpose of elections is to evaluate the democratic processes. Elections were the last thing the Bush administration needed.

The best solution is for the US to completely withdraw its armed forces from Iraq. All Iraqis are in favour of elections as long as the Occupation forces withdraw from Iraq. According to recent polls, 98 percent of Iraqis want the Americans to leave their country. Meanwhile a poll conducted by the Chicago Council on Foreign Relations (CCFR) has reveals that more than two-thirds of both the US public and US leaders agree than the US should withdraw from Iraq if a clear majority of Iraqis want it to do so.

The US Occupation of Iraq is the most unpopular occupation in history. It is a violent occupation where innocent women, children and unarmed men have been massacred. More than 100,000 innocent Iraqis have died; thousands are imprisoned and tortured; the lives of millions more have been wrecked. The conditions of child health in US-occupied Iraq are now even worse than during the genocidal years of sanction. Despite that, those who are responsible for this wanton destruction of human lives have not been indicted for war crimes or been held accountable by prosecutors. A devastated nation and broken defenceless people are forced to prepare for an old-fashion colonial dictatorship, which has its echoes in other foreign countries under the tutelage of the US administration.

US history of preparing elections in foreign countries is full of bad examples. In 1984, the US was involved in the El Salvador elections that brought an assassin (Roberto d A'ubuisson) and a friend of the US to power. Roberto d'Aubuisson, leader for life of the ARENA party, that ruled El Salvador since, was named by the UN Truth Commission report to be implicated in the assassination of Archbishop Oscar Romero. The Archbishop of El Salvador was assassinated in March 1980, while giving a mass in a church and just before sainthood.

The 1984 elections in El Salvador "were little more than a farce designed to give democratic respectability to a regime that was perpetuating some of the worst human rights abuses in the hemisphere", wrote Mark Engler of Foreign Policy in Focus. Those who seized power in El Salvador with the help of uncle Reagan have murdered more than 75,000 people. In 1993, the UN Truth Commission report found that the army and its death squads committed 90% of the atrocities in the conflict. Among their heinous crimes were the 1989 murder of six Jesuit priests, and the slaughter of hundreds of villagers. The rebels, led by the FMNL party were responsible for 5 %, and the other 5% remained unknown, said the report.

In the March 2004 elections, the US used fear and threat against the Salvadoran people to promote its preferred candidates, members of the ARENA party. The Salvadorian people voted with a gun pointed to their head. The big loser of the elections are the majority of people of El Salvador, wrote Joe DeRaymond of Centro de Intercambio y Solidaridad who monitored the elections.

During the 2004 US elections, Vice President Dick Cheney praised El Salvador dictatorship as a model for 'democracy-building' in Iraq. One wonders why the US is interested in the El Salvador's model of democracy and not a Western model of democracy for Iraq? Now, as it happens, this is something I know quite a bit about. I, for some reasons have experience living in good democratic nations. I spent some years in Switzerland, Austria, New Zealand, Scandinavia and Australia. All these major democratic countries have fairly decent models of democratic elections. Indeed, the Swiss model of democracy is the best I have experienced and is very suitable for a heterogeneous country like Iraq, which has no similarity to El Salvador.

In 1993, the American analyst, Noam Chomsky commented on the US approach to 'democracy-building' in El Salvador. Chomsky wrote, "[b]y and large, our approach in El Salvador has been successful. The popular organizations have been decimated, just as Archbishop Romero predicted. Tens of thousands have been slaughtered and more than a million have become refugees. This is one of the most sordid episodes in US history-and it's got a lot of competition". It is this successful approach that the US administration is using to promote America's 'democracy-building' posture in Iraq. The US is more interested in empire-building rather than 'democracy-building'.

It should be borne in mind that, the US interference in election processes around the world is illegal and hypocritical. "The terror bombing of homes, hospitals and religious buildings by hundreds of airplanes and helicopter gunships is described by the media as 'securing the city [of Fallujah] for free elections'", wrote James Petras. The US message for Iraqis is; vote for the Occupation or you will die. Can you imagine Iran is preparing for a "democratic elections" of a puppet regime in Iraq with a massive terror campaign against the civilian population?

Instead of finding an exit strategy to end the violence in Iraq, the Bush administration is increasing it; using the pretext of democracy. An exit strategy to end the US Occupation of Iraq is not impossible. The UN General Assembly, which is less influence by the US and Britain, is the most preferable body to take over the Iraqi affairs and helps the Iraqi people achieve sovereignty and freedom. The UN has an obligation to condemn an act of aggression an illegal occupation of a sovereign nation.

There is no Vichy near Baghdad; there is Fallujah. The US-sponsored undemocratic elections in Iraq are against the long-term interests of the Iraqi people. The upcoming elections will not help achieve democracy and sovereignty for Iraq. The best solution for Iraq is the end of US Occupation and the true liberation of the Iraqi people. This will allow the Iraqi people to gain their freedom and organise their country for free and fair elections.



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The Salvador Option

By Michael Hirsh and John Barry

Newsweek

Saturday 08 January 2005

The Pentagon may put Special-Forces-led assassination or kidnapping teams in Iraq.

What to do about the deepening quagmire of Iraq? The Pentagon's latest approach is being called "the Salvador option"-and the fact that it is being discussed at all is a measure of just how worried Donald Rumsfeld really is. "What everyone agrees is that we can't just go on as we are," one senior military officer told Newsweek. "We have to find a way to take the offensive against the insurgents. Right now, we are playing defense. And we are losing." Last November's operation in Fallujah, most analysts agree, succeeded less in breaking "the back" of the insurgency-as Marine Gen. John Sattler optimistically declared at the time-than in spreading it out.

Now, Newsweek has learned, the Pentagon is intensively debating an option that dates back to a still-secret strategy in the Reagan administration's battle against the leftist guerrilla insurgency in El Salvador in the early 1980s. Then, faced with a losing war against Salvadoran rebels, the U.S. government funded or supported "nationalist" forces that allegedly included so-called death squads directed to hunt down and kill rebel leaders and sympathizers. Eventually the insurgency was quelled, and many U.S. conservatives consider the policy to have been a success-despite the deaths of innocent civilians and the subsequent Iran-Contra arms-for-hostages scandal. (Among the current administration officials who dealt with Central America back then is John Negroponte, who is today the U.S. ambassador to Iraq. Under Reagan, he was ambassador to Honduras.)

Following that model, one Pentagon proposal would send Special Forces teams to advise, support and possibly train Iraqi squads, most likely hand-picked Kurdish Peshmerga fighters and Shiite militiamen, to target Sunni insurgents and their sympathizers, even across the border into Syria, according to military insiders familiar with the discussions. It remains unclear, however, whether this would be a policy of assassination or so-called "snatch" operations, in which the targets are sent to secret facilities for interrogation. The current thinking is that while U.S. Special Forces would lead operations in, say, Syria, activities inside Iraq itself would be carried out by Iraqi paramilitaries, officials tell Newsweek.

Also being debated is which agency within the U.S. government-the Defense department or CIA-would take responsibility for such an operation. Rumsfeld's Pentagon has aggressively sought to build up its

own intelligence-gathering and clandestine capability with an operation run by Defense Undersecretary Stephen Cambone. But since the Abu Ghraib interrogations scandal, some military officials are ultra-wary of any operations that could run afoul of the ethics codified in the Uniform Code of Military Justice. That, they argue, is the reason why such covert operations have always been run by the CIA and authorized by a special presidential finding. (In "covert" activity, U.S. personnel operate under cover and the U.S. government will not confirm that it instigated or ordered them into action if they are captured or killed.)

Meanwhile, intensive discussions are taking place inside the Senate Intelligence Committee over the Defense department's efforts to expand the involvement of U.S. Special Forces personnel in intelligence-gathering missions. Historically, Special Forces' intelligence gathering has been limited to objectives directly related to upcoming military operations-"preparation of the battlefield," in military lingo. But, according to intelligence and defense officials, some Pentagon civilians for years have sought to expand the use of Special Forces for other intelligence missions.

Pentagon civilians and some Special Forces personnel believe CIA civilian managers have traditionally been too conservative in planning and executing the kind of undercover missions that Special Forces soldiers believe they can effectively conduct. CIA traditionalists are believed to be adamantly opposed to ceding any authority to the Pentagon. Until now, Pentagon proposals for a capability to send soldiers out on intelligence missions without direct CIA approval or participation have been shot down. But counter-terrorist strike squads, even operating covertly, could be deemed to fall within the Defense department's orbit.

The interim government of Prime Minister Ayad Allawi is said to be among the most forthright proponents of the Salvador option. Maj. Gen.Muhammad Abdallah al-Shahwani, director of Iraq's National Intelligence Service, may have been laying the groundwork for the idea with a series of interviews during the past ten days. Shahwani told the London-based Arabic daily Al-Sharq al-Awsat that the insurgent leadership-he named three former senior figures in the Saddam regime, including Saddam Hussein's half-brother-were essentially safe across the border in a Syrian sanctuary. "We are certain that they are in Syria and move easily between Syrian and Iraqi territories," he said, adding that efforts to extradite them "have not borne fruit so far."

Shahwani also said that the U.S. occupation has failed to crack the problem of broad support for the insurgency. The insurgents, he said, "are mostly in the Sunni areas where the population there, almost 200,000, is sympathetic to them." He said most Iraqi people do not actively support the insurgents or provide them with material or logistical help, but at the same time they won't turn them in. One military source involved in the Pentagon debate agrees that this is the crux of the problem, and



he suggests that new offensive operations are needed that would create a fear of aiding the insurgency. "The Sunni population is paying no price for the support it is giving to the terrorists," he said. "From their point of view, it is cost-free. We have to change that equation."

Pentagon sources emphasize there has been no decision yet to launch the Salvador option. Last week, Rumsfeld decided to send a retired four-star general, Gary Luck, to Iraq on an open-ended mission to review the entire military strategy there. But with the U.S. Army strained to the breaking point, military strategists note that a dramatic new approach might be needed-perhaps one as potentially explosive as the Salvador option.
http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/6802629/site/newsweek/



"Riding with the Bad Boys"

The rise of Iraqi death squads

By Mike Whitney

11/30/05 "ICH" - --- The New York Times confirmed today that the "Iraqi (security) forces are carrying out executions in predominantly Sunnis neighborhoods." Hundreds of men have been taken from taken from their homes by men in Iraqi uniforms and either "found dead in ditches or fields, with bullet holes to their temples, acid burns to their skin, and holes in their bodies apparently made by electrical drills. Many have simply vanished". (Dexter Filkins, *"Sunnis accuse Iraqi Military of Kidnappings and Slayings"* NY Times)

The Times merely reiterates what has been echoing through internet for some time now, that the Iraqi Interior Ministry is using lethal force to undercut the Sunni-led resistance and terrorize the public. The plan was first uncovered in an article by Seymour Hersh in January 2005. Hersh reported that the Pentagon was intending to trigger "The Salvador Option"; a strategy which involves the training of "death squads" to execute a bloody secret war against "alleged" insurgents.

"Do you remember the right-wing execution squads in El Salvador?" one official asked Hersh. "We founded them and we financed them. The objective now is to recruit locals in any area we want."

Then he added ominously, "We're going to be riding with the bad boys."

The authorization for the death squads comes straight from the Oval Office. According to Chris Floyd, "Through a series of secret executive orders, George W. Bush has given Rumsfeld the authority to turn the entire world into a 'global free-fire zone''. (Chris Floyd, *Darkness Visible: The Pentagon plan to foment terrorism is now in Operation*)

Floyd's observations are consistent with what we already know of Rumsfeld's involvement in overseeing the development of the Iraqi security apparatus. Following the presidential elections in Iraq, Rumsfeld paid a surprise visit on the newly-appointed al-Jaafari to discourage any changes in the Interior Ministry where American agents were training Iraqi goons in the fine art of torture and assassination.

Commenting to BBC, Rumsfeld issued a clear "hands off" warning to al-Jaafari: "Its important that the new government be attentive to the competence of the people in the ministries and that they avoid unnecessary turbulence." He said it was important for the security forces to continue building their strength because US forces were not going to be there forever.

The genocidal attacks reported by the New York Times are the predictable upshot of a process that was initiated by the Pentagon to destroy the Iraqi resistance through violence alone. As yet, there has been no effort to engage in dialogue with members of the resistance. This suggests that the Bush administration still believes that the dilemma they face can be resolved without a political solution.

There can be no political solution without direct negotiations with the Iraqi resistance. The smoke-and-mirrors phantom that the Bush administration mistakes for democracy has nothing to do with the serious formation of a legitimate Iraqi government. Voting, in itself, does not signify democracy unless there is broad acceptance among the many factions in the society. The massive demonstration of daily violence indicates a clear rejection of the legitimacy of the state. This can only be decided by eliminating the factors that prop up the puppet regime (the occupation) and engaging in a political process free from outside coercion.

The death squads are in fact just one part of a three-pronged strategy to crush the resistance and establish Iraq as a corporate-colony of American energy giants. The other phase of the operation involves the systematic decimation of Sunni cities.

In the last few months the US military has carried out numerous assaults on Sunni cities to break the resistance and destroy its ability to wage war. In consecutive operations, the occupation forces have followed the same ruthless pattern of wanton destruction and collective punishment they perfected in their siege of Falluja. Ghali Hassan's shocking article, *"Iraq: A Criminal Process"* (Global Research) is an invaluable resource for those who really want to grasp the breadth of the war crimes being perpetrated in Iraq.

Hassan says:
"Just before the U.S. forces attacked al Qaim last 29 August, a thriving town of 150,000 people in western Iraq, they cordoned it off, cut electricity, water and food supplies. Then they indiscriminately and disproportionately blanketed the town, from the ground and from the air, with artillery shells, cluster bombs and napalm bombs with the full knowledge that civilians, particularly women and children, would be killed.

When it was all over, the U.S. Marines entered the city to fight (with air cover) those who were still alive. Humanitarian aides and medical supplies were prevented from entering the town, in gross violations of international law and the Geneva Conventions. This cycle of criminal process to legitimize the colonization of Iraq is depicted by the Bush-Blair axis as the "political process" towards "democracy."

The slaughter and destruction in western Iraq are not simply isolated incidents that are kept from the media. They are, in fact, a pattern of willful devastation of city after city executed by the Defense Dept. to break the back of the resistance by decimating the civilian enclaves where they draw their support. The results have meant "scores of casualties due to 'indiscriminate bombing' by US forces. Paralleling the atrocities committed in other towns and cities, all of which savagely attacked and destroyed the entire population of Tal Afar are now 'ethnically cleansed' refugees". (G. Hassan)

The death squads and the intentional destruction of the Sunni heartland comprise the first two parts of the three-pronged strategy to defeat the Iraqi resistance. The final leg on the stool is the propaganda war that is being directed against the American people to conceal the details of the military's war crimes. The arrest or liquidation of independent journalists reporting from the front has allowed the Pentagon's "embedded" legions to shape a narrative of benign intervention in the name of fighting terrorism. According to the Washington Post not one of the more then one thousand prisoners captured in Tal Afar was a foreign fighter. This should put to rest the Pentagon's spurious claim that Sunni cities are "Al Qaida strongholds."

American media now functions as an annex of the War Department. The news is fashioned to meet the

policy objectives of the state and its constituents. The war that appears on TV stations across America, where US soldiers are dutifully ushering a backwards Muslim nation towards democracy and free enterprise, bears no resemblance to the gruesome realities of the colonial war that is devastating Iraqi society.
The media's performance in Iraq has been the most successful part of the entire campaign. It continues to embellish, obfuscate or divert attention from the clear facts of America's criminal involvement.

The media has unfailingly provided the ever-shifting rationale for the ongoing occupation and continued to mobilize public support for the most unpopular war in American history. Its embedded propagandists have been more vital to the war-effort than laser-guided technology, cluster-bombs or detention centers.

The Bush administration's three-pronged strategy for Iraq precludes a political solution because it is designed as a model for future wars. The Washington warlords and their boardroom constituents have no intention of negotiating the terms of global rule; that is the exclusive duty of the White House mandarins.

Negotiation and diplomacy are signs of weakness. The administration will remain faithful to its right-wing mandate; concealing its real goals behind the smokescreen of withdrawal, while ruling according to its basic precepts of force and deception.
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Death squads found inside Iraqi government

By Matthew Schofield
Knight Ridder Newspapers

03/12/06 "Knight Ridder" -- -- BAGHDAD - Senior Iraqi officials on Sunday confirmed for the first time that death squads composed of government employees had operated illegally from inside two government ministries.

"The death squads that we have captured are in the Defense and Interior ministries," Interior Minister Bayan Jabr said during a joint news conference with the minister of Defense. "There are people who have infiltrated the army and the interior."

Jabr said that investigations into death squads were ongoing in the Defense Ministry. He said the Interior Ministry had arrested 22 people, and subsequently released 18 as innocent after interrogation, detaining four for further questioning.

"Now we have sent them (the four) to the court because it hasn't been proven that all four were involved," Jabr said. "Although I did not have clear signs (of their guilt) I sent them to the Justice Ministry so that the law could be carried out."

Although Jabr appeared to confirm the existence of death squads, the scale of the operation uncovered would appear to be far smaller than critics had alleged.

Sunni Muslims have long complained about Shiite death squads that arrived wearing official uniforms and rode in official-looking vehicles to haul away victims.

Knight Ridder first reported the accusation of death squads in February 2005, and in June documented cases in which victims were taken away allegedly by men wearing Interior Ministry commando uniforms were later found handcuffed and killed execution-style.

The government had long denied the existence of such death squads. Sunnis had accused the Badr Organization, a Shiite militia supported by Iran, of being behind the killings, inside or outside of government ministries. Jabr is a senior leader of the Supreme Council for Islamic Revolution in Iraq, a leading Shiite political party, and has close ties to the Badr Organization.

The investigation that led to Sunday's confirmation of government death squads came after American forces stopped a group of men who were passing through a checkpoint in late January.

The men wore official uniforms and said they were preparing to kill a Sunni man in their custody.

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Impunity

“Successive imperialist powers have shown that the bottom line in combating the hopes and dreams of ordinary people is to resort to spreading terror through the application of extreme violence.” Max Fuller; “For Iraq, the ‘El Salvador Option’ becomes Reality”

By Mike Whitney

06/09/06 "**Information Clearing House**" **--** **--** George Bush is right; Iraq is “the central battlefield in the global war on terror”. Regrettably, it is United States that is the main sponsor and

supporter of that terror in the form of American-trained death squads. Death squad activity in Iraq now accounts for more than 1,000 casualties per month. The Baghdad morgue has become a conveyor-belt for American-generated carnage.

Up to now, the US involvement in the killing has been effectively concealed by the mainstream media. Apart from infrequent reports on the internet, there is little information connecting the burgeoning death toll to America's counterinsurgency operations.

That changed on May 4, 2006 when Congressman Dennis Kucinich gave a speech on the floor of the House which linked the Bush administration to the death squad's in Iraq. Reading from a long list of newspaper articles he had compiled, Kucinich provided a detailed account of America's disturbing undercover war. Naturally, his speech was shunned by the major media and consigned to the memory hole. It outlines the extent of America's complicity in the ongoing slaughter and asks us to question whether any additional involvement can be morally justified.

Kucinich's speech was framed in the context of 2 letters which he delivered to Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld and President George Bush. His comments are entered below:

April 5, 2006
Dear Secretary Rumsfeld:

I am writing to request a copy of all records pertaining to Pentagon plans to use U.S. Special Forces to advise, support and train Iraqi assassination and kidnapping teams.

On January 8, 2005, Newsweek magazine first published a report that the Pentagon had a proposal to train elite Iraqi squads to quell the growing Sunni insurgency. The proposal has been called the "Salvador Option," which references the U.S. military assistance program, initiated under the Carter Administration and subsequently pursued by the Reagan Administration, that funded and supported "nationalist" paramilitary forces who hunted down and assassinated rebel leaders and their supporters in El Salvador. This program in El Salvador was highly controversial and received much public backlash in the U.S., as tens of thousands of innocent civilians were assassinated and "disappeared," including notable members of the Catholic Church, Archbishop Oscar Romero and the four American churchwomen. According to the Newsweek report, Pentagon conservatives wanted to resurrect the Salvadoran program in Iraq because they believed that despite the incredible cost in human lives and human rights, it was successful in eradicating guerrillas.

Mr. Secretary, at a news conference on January 11, 2005, you publicly stated that the idea of a Salvador option was "nonsense." Yet mounting evidence suggests that the U.S. has in fact funded and trained Iraqi assassination and kidnapping teams and these teams are now operating with horrific success across Iraq.

We know that the Pentagon received funding for training Iraqi paramilitaries. About one year before the

Newsweek report on the "Salvador Option," it was reported in the American Prospect magazine on January 1, 2004 that part of $3 billion of the $87 billion Emergency Supplemental Appropriations bill to fund operations in Iraq, signed into law on November 6, 2003, was designated for the creation of a paramilitary unit manned by militiamen associated with former Iraqi exile groups. According to the Prospect article, experts predicted that creation of this paramilitary unit would "lead to a wave of extrajudicial killings, not only of armed rebels but of nationalists, other opponents of the U.S. occupation and thousands of civilian Baathists." The article further described how the bulk of the $3 billion program, disguised as an Air Force classified program, would be used to "support U.S. efforts to create a lethal, and revenge-minded Iraqi security force." According to one of the article's sources, John Pike, an expert of classified military budgets at www.globalsecurity.org. "the big money would be for standing up an Iraqi secret police to liquidate the resistance."

We know that some of the Pentagon's Iraq experts were involved in the Reagan Administration's paramilitary program in El Salvador. Colonel James Steele, Counselor to the U.S. Ambassador for Iraqi Security Forces, formerly led the U.S. Military Advisory Group in El Salvador from 1984-1986, where he developed special operating forces at brigade level during the height of the conflict. The role of these forces in El Salvador was to attack "insurgent" leadership, their supporters, sources of supply, and base camps. Currently Colonel Steele has been assigned to work with the new elite Iraqi counter-insurgency unit known as the Special Police Commandos, operating under Iraq's Interior Ministry. Director of National Intelligence, John Negroponte, was U.S. Ambassador to Iraq from June 2004 to April 2005. From 1981 to 1985, he was ambassador to Honduras where he played a key role in coordinating U.S. covert aid to the Contras, anti-Sandinista militias who targeted civilians in Nicaragua. Additionally, he oversaw the U.S. backing of a military death squad in Honduras, Battalion 3-16, which specialized in torture and assassination. The U.S. had similar programs of supporting paramilitary groups set up Nicaragua and Honduras as its program in El Salvador. In a Democracy Now interview on January 10, 2005, Allan Nairn, who broke the story about U.S. support of death squads in El Salvador, suspected that Ambassador Negroponte would most likely be involved in the economic side of U.S. support to death squads in Iraq.

We know that a wave of abductions and executions, in the style of the death squads of El Salvador, and with ties to an official government sponsor, and to the U.S., has hit Iraq. News reports over the past 10 months strongly suggest that the U.S. has trained and supported highly organized Iraqi commando brigades, and that some of those brigades have operated as death squads, abducting and assassinating thousands of Iraqis. Some news highlights: • May 1, 2005 -- Los Angeles Times reports that the U.S. is providing technical and logistical support to the Maghawir (Fearless Warrior) brigades, the Interior Ministry's special commandos, according to Major General Rasheed Flayih Mohammed. Iraqi authorities plan to increase deployment of the 12,000-strong Maghawir (Fearless Warrior) brigades, which are composed of well-trained veterans who have worked closely with U.S. forces in Najaf, Fallujah and Mosul and include the Wolf, Scorpion, Tiger and Thunder brigades. • May 16-20, 2005 -- Los Angeles Times and New York Times reveal discovery of 46 bodies, all Iraqi men abducted and slain execution-style, in various locations: floating in the Tigris, dumped in ditches and garbage-strewn lots, and buried at a poultry farm. • June 15, 2005 -- Washington Post reports that U.S. forces had knowledge of secret and illegal abductions of hundreds of minority Arabs in Kirkuk. The abductions were by forces led by Kurdish political parties and backed by the U.S. military. • June 20, 2005 -- Los Angeles Times reports that Saad Sultan, of Iraq Human Rights Ministry said that police and security forces attached to the Iraqi Interior Ministry, thousands of whom have been trained by American instructors, are responsible for

abusing up to 60% of estimated 12,000 detainees in prison and military compounds. He says the units have used tactics reminiscent of Saddam's secret intelligence squads. • July 3, 2005 -- Reuters News reports that the government of Iraq publicly acknowledged that the new security forces were using torture. Article further says that accounts are common of people being seized by armed men in the uniforms of the police, army or special units like Baghdad's Wolf Brigade police commandos, and then disappearing without trace or being found dead. • July 28, 2005 -- Los Angeles Times reports that members of a California Army National Guard company, the Alpha Company, who were implicated in a detainee abuse scandal, trained and conducted joint operations with the Wolf Brigade, a commando unit criticized for human rights abuses. In an online Alpha Company newsletter, Captain Haviland wrote, "We have assigned 2nd Platoon to help them transition, and install some of our 'Killer Company' aggressive tactical spirit in them." The article further states that despite the Wolf Brigade's controversial reputation for human rights violations, it is regarded as the gold standard for Iraqi security forces by U.S. military officials. • August 31, 2005 -- BBC reports that on the night of August 24, a large force of the Volcano Brigade raided homes in Al-Hurriyah city in the Baghdad, kidnapping and then executing 76 citizens. The victims were all shot in the head after their hands and feet had been tied up. They suffered the harshest forms of torture, deformation and burning. • November 16, 2005 -- Reuters News reports the discovery of 173 malnourished men, some of whom were tortured, imprisoned in a secret jail run by Shi'ite militias tied to the Interior Ministry. • November 17, 2005 -- Newsday reports that in the past year, the U.S. military has helped build up Iraqi commandos under guidance from James Steele, a former Army Special Forces officer who led U.S. counterinsurgency efforts in El Salvador in the 1980s. The brigades built up over the past year include the Lion Brigade, Scorpion Brigade and Volcano Brigade. • February 15, 2006 -- Associated Press reports that the Interior Ministry has launched a probe into death squad allegations. • February 19, 2006 -- BBC reveals that morgues in Baghdad receive dozens of bodies picked up daily from rivers, sewage plants, waste burial sites, farms and desert areas. Most of the bodies are handcuffed and blindfolded civilians with a bullet or more in the forehead, indicating that they were executed. The handcuffs used on the victims are like those used by the Iraqi police. • February 26, 2006 -- The Independent reports that outgoing United Nations' human rights chief in Iraq, John Pace, revealed that hundreds of Iraqis are being tortured to death or summarily executed every month in Baghdad alone by the death squads working from the Ministry of Interior. He said that up to three-quarters of the corpses stacked in the Baghdad mortuary show evidence of gunshot wounds to the head or injuries caused by drill-bits or burning cigarettes. • March 9, 2006 -- Los Angeles Times reports that Iraqi police officers who worked at the Interior Ministry's illegal prison had received American training, and that U.S. trainers have also given extensive support to 27 brigades of heavily armed commandos accused of a series of abuses, including the death of 14 Sunni Arabs who were locked in an airtight van last summer. • March 10, 2006 -- Sidney Morning Herald reports that men wearing the uniforms of U.S.-trained security forces, which are controlled by the Interior Ministry, abducted 50 people in a daylight raid on a security agency. Masked men who are driving what appear to be new government-owned vehicles are carrying out many of the raids. • March 27, 2006 -- The Independent reports that while U.S. authorities have begun criticizing the Iraqi government over the "death squads," many of the paramilitary groups accused of the abuse, such as the Wolf Brigade, the Scorpion Brigade and the Special Police Commandos were set up with the help of the American military. Furthermore, the militiamen were provided with U.S. advisers some of whom were veterans of Latin American counter-insurgency which also had led to allegations of death squads at the time.

Mr. Secretary, in light of this evidence of U.S. support for and the existence of death squads in Iraq, what is the basis for your January 11, 2005 statement, that the idea of a Salvador option in Iraq is "nonsense"? I request a

copy of all records pertaining to Pentagon plans to use U.S. Special Forces to advise, support and train Iraqi assassination and kidnapping teams. I look forward to receiving your response.

Sincerely, Dennis J. Kucinich, Member of Congress

Kucinich's speech gives us a much better idea of what is really going on in Iraq. He exposes the US as the driving force behind the paramilitary units that are currently torturing and killing vast numbers of Iraqi civilians. The entire operation has been set into motion by American intelligence agencies with the intention of inciting sectarian violence and thrusting the country towards partition.

The appearance of Colonel James Steele, as counselor for the Iraqi Security Forces, should remove any doubt about the real nature of America's involvement. Steele's "stock and trade" is the "spreading terror through the application of extreme violence"; Max Fuller's apt description of US counterinsurgency campaigns in Latin America. Steele was clearly enlisted to train others in the techniques of guerilla warfare and spread mayhem throughout the country.

Kucinch's claims are particularly illuminating in relation to the recent killing of terror-mastermind Abu Musab al Zarqawi. Zarqawi was the Pentagon's "psy-ops invention" who was created to rationalize the steady deterioration of Iraqi society. By connecting the Bush administration to the death squads the entire foundation for the war on terror begins to crumble. As Kucinich points out, the main proponent of terrorist activity in Iraq is the United States not Islamic extremists. American death squads are getting away with murder, and they are doing so with complete impunity.
http://www.informationclearinghouse.info/article13558.htm

The American Advisors That Set Up The Interior Ministry



James Steele **Steven Casteel**

The Salvador Option has been invoked in Iraq

The American public is being prepared. If the attack on Iran does come, there will be no warning, no declaration of war, no truth.

By John Pilger

B*Russell*s Tribunal Dossier
Introduction to the "Salvador option" and Iraq's "Death squads" - *PART 2* -



05/04/06 "ICH" -- -- The lifts in the New York Hilton played CNN on a small screen you could not avoid watching. Iraq was top of the news; pronouncements about a "civil war" and "sectarian violence" were repeated incessantly. It was as if the US invasion had never happened and the killing of tens of thousands of civilians by the Americans was a surreal fiction. The Iraqis were mindless Arabs, haunted by religion, ethnic strife and the need to blow themselves up. Unctuous puppet politicians were paraded with no hint that their exercise yard was inside an American fortress.

And when you left the lift, this followed you to your room, to the hotel gym, the airport, the next airport and the next country. Such is the power of America's corporate propaganda, which, as Edward Said pointed out in ***Culture and Imperialism*** , "penetrates electronically" with its equivalent of a party line.

The party line changed the other day. For almost three years it was that al-Qaeda was the ***driving force behind the "insurgency", led by Abu Musab al-Zarqawi,*** a bloodthirsty Jordanian who was clearly being groomed for the kind of infamy Saddam Hussein enjoys. It mattered not that al-Zarqawi had never been seen alive and that only a fraction of the "insurgents" followed al-Qaeda. For the Americans, Zarqawi's role was to distract attention from the thing that almost all Iraqis oppose: the brutal Anglo-American occupation of their country.

Now that al-Zarqawi has been replaced by "sectarian violence" and "civil war", the big news is the attacks by Sunnis on Shia mosques and bazaars. The real news, which is not reported in the CNN "mainstream", is that the Salvador Option has been invoked in Iraq. This is the campaign of terror by death squads armed and trained by the US, which attack Sunnis and Shias alike. The goal is the incitement of a real civil war and the break-up of Iraq, the original war aim of Bush's administration.

The ministry of the interior in Baghdad, which is run by the CIA, directs the principal death squads. Their members are not exclusively Shia, as the myth goes. The most brutal are the Sunni-led Special Police Commandos, headed by former senior officers in Saddam's Ba'ath Party. This unit was formed and trained by CIA "counter-insurgency" experts, including veterans of the CIA's terror operations in central America in the 1980s, notably El Salvador. In his new book, Empire's Workshop (Metropolitan Books), the American historian Greg Grandin describes the Salvador Option thus: "Once in office, [President] Reagan came down hard on central America, in effect letting his administration's most committed militarists set and execute policy. In El Salvador, they provided more than a million dollars a day to fund a lethal counter-insurgency campaign . . . All told, US allies in central America during Reagan's two terms killed over 300,000 people, tortured hundreds of thousands and drove millions into exile."

Although the Reagan administration spawned the current Bushites, or "neo-cons", the pattern was set earlier. In Vietnam, death squads trained, armed and directed by the CIA murdered up to 50,000 people in Operation Phoenix. In the mid-1960s in Indonesia CIA officers compiled "death lists" for General Suharto's killing spree during his seizure of power. After the 2003 invasion, it was only a matter of time before this venerable "policy" was applied in Iraq.

According to the investigative writer Max Fuller (National Review Online), the key CIA manager of the interior ministry death squads "cut his teeth in Vietnam before moving on to direct the US military mission in El

Salvador". Professor Grandin names another central America veteran whose job now is to "train a ruthless counter-insurgent force made up of ex-Ba'athist thugs". Another, says Fuller, is well-known for his "production of death lists". A secret militia run by the Americans is the Facilities Protection Service, which has been responsible for bombings. "The British and US Special Forces," concludes Fuller, "in conjunction with the [US-created] intelligence services at the Iraqi defence ministry, are fabricating insurgent bombings of Shias."

On 16 March, Reuters reported the arrest of an American "security contractor" who was found with weapons and explosives in his car. Last year, two Britons disguised as Arabs were caught with a car full of weapons and explosives; British forces bulldozed the Basra prison to rescue them. The Boston Globe recently reported: "The FBI's counter-terrorism unit has launched a broad investigation of US-based theft rings after discovering that some of the vehicles used in deadly car bombings in Iraq, including attacks that killed US troops and Iraqi civilians, were probably stolen in the United States, according to senior government officials."

As I say, all this has been tried before - just as the preparation of the American public for an atrocious attack on Iran is similar to the WMD fabrications in Iraq. If that attack comes, there will be no warning, no declaration of war, no truth. Imprisoned in the Hilton lift, staring at CNN, my fellow passengers could be excused for not making sense of the Middle East, or Latin America, or anywhere. They are isolated. Nothing is explained. Congress is silent. The Democrats are moribund. And the freest media on earth insult the public every day. As Voltaire put it: "Those who can make you believe absurdities can make you commit atrocities."
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Death Squads And Diplomacy

By Robert Dreyfuss
10/05/05 "TomPaine.com" -- -- A flurry of Arab diplomacy over the last few days is unfolding in a rear-guard effort to prevent the crisis in Iraq from exploding into what Saudi Foreign Minister Saud Al Faisal warned last month could be a regional civil war involving not only Iraq, but all of its neighbors.
The main, and well-deserved, target of Saud's ire was the increasingly authoritarian and brutal rule of the main Iraqi Shiite parties, especially the Supreme Council for the Islamic Revolution in Iraq (SCIRI), whose Badr Brigade militia are terrorizing Iraq's secular, urban Shiite population and carrying out death-squad attacks against Sunnis. The attacks against the Sunnis are aimed not only at the Iraqi armed resistance but at secular, nationalist Sunni leaders and activists.

Last week, I reported on the fear of Shiite militias and death squads as reported by Aiham Al Sammarae, an Iraqi oppositionist and former minister under the interim government in 2004 who is trying to broker a deal with the Iraqi resistance. Since then, other reports have surfaced concerning the extensive violence carried out by paramilitary forces tied to SCIRI and to Al Dawa, SCIRI's partner in the Shiite religious bloc in Iraq. By now it is

clear that if Tony Soprano lived in Iraq, he'd be a member of the Shiite militia. Consider the following report from CBS News:

CBS News correspondent Lara Logan reports there is a secret, ruthless cleansing of the country's towns and cities. Bodies—blindfolded, bound and executed—just appear, like the rotting corpses of 36 Sunni men that turned up in a dry riverbed south of Baghdad.

CBS News traced 16 of those men to a single street in a Baghdad suburb, where family members showed CBS News how the killers forced their way into their homes in the middle of the night and dragged away their sons and fathers.

"My uncles were tortured, they even poured acid on them," a young boy told CBS News.
Clutching photographs of the murdered men, the women and children left behind came together to grieve.

One woman said as her husband was marched away she sent her son after him with his slippers, but his abductor sent the child back with a chilling message: No need for slippers—he will come back dead.
They were targeted for one reason alone: all were Sunnis.
Or this, from the *Chicago Tribune* :

In the dead of night, bands of armed men in Iraqi commando uniforms stormed Baghdad's Hurriyah neighborhood in late August, breaking down doors with sledgehammers and grenades.

If the family inside was Shiite, the gunmen moved on to another house, witnesses said. If the family was Sunni, the gunmen tore through the building, demolishing furniture and manhandling those inside. More than 70 young Sunni Arab men were whisked away.

Countless atrocities, too, have been perpetrated by Sunni gangs and by terrorists associated with Abu Musab Al Zarqawi. But the killings by the Shiite militias are far more chilling because they have an entirely different quality: They are carried out by gunmen tied to the U.S.-supported regime in Baghdad. They don't draw criticism from U.S. officials, and most American media reports continue to portray the Shiites as victims and the Sunnis as aggressors.

Still, it is the ferocity of the Shiite fanaticism governing Iraq today, and the ruling circle's ever-closer ties to Iran, that prompted Prince Saud to warn of a regional civil war sparked by the Shiites. He brought that message to Washington last week, talking to senators and to the Washington press corps. He then flew back to the Middle East to attend a meeting of Arab foreign ministers, including Iraq's Foreign Minister Hossein Zebari. We'll come to the Arab League meeting shortly, but first some background:

After Saud's criticism of Iraq's Shiite crazies, one of them—Iraqi interior minister Bayan Jabor—lashed out at Saudi Arabia. "This Iraq," said Jabor, who as interior minister is directly responsible for the Shiite hit squads, "is the cradle of civilization that taught humanity reading and writing, and some Bedouin riding a camel wants to teach us!" He went on to lambaste Saudi Arabia and threaten to provoke an uprising of Shiites who predominate

in Saudi Arabia's oil-rich Eastern Province. "There are more than four million Shiites in the kingdom who are considered second-class citizens," he sniffed.

Later, at the Arab League foreign ministers' meeting, two important things happened. First, the Iraqi foreign minister, Zebari, a Kurd, abjectly apologized for Jabor's calling Saud a Bedouin. More important, the League decided to launch an Iraqi peace initiative. The secretary-general of the Arab League is going to Baghdad on a mission to find common ground among Iraq's warring factions, including the Iraqi Sunni-led resistance. And the League is putting together a plan to convene a conference led by Iraq's Arab neighbors along with all Iraqi factions, in an effort to prevent civil war and stabilize the country. It's a very important step, one that probably does not have much more than token support from the Bush administration, which is stuck on its stay-the-course fantasy of a victory strategy. But important people in Washington believe that Jordan and Saudi Arabia, both Sunni kingdoms, are the best mediators between the United States and the Iraqi opposition.
In that context, U.S. Ambassador to Iraq Zalmay Khalilzad managed to find his way down to Saudi Arabia this weekend to talk to Saudi Arabia's crown prince about Iraq. Iraq—and its Shiite fundamentalist ruling clique—may be too far gone to be salvaged. Perhaps civil war is inevitable. But if the United States would get out of Iraq, give the Arab League and the UN a chance to manage things there, and take part in Arab-led talks with the Sunnis, catastrophe might be averted. It's not likely, but at this point we need straws to grasp at.

Robert Dreyfuss is a freelance writer based in Alexandria, Va., who specializes in politics and national security issues. He is a contributing editor at The Nation, *a contributing writer at* Mother Jones, *a senior correspondent for* The American Prospect, *and a frequent contributor to* Rolling Stone. *His book,* Devil's Game: How the United States Helped Unleash Fundamentalist Islam, *will be published by Henry Holt/Metropolitan Books in the fall.*
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The Salvador option

By any standard, the ongoing American occupation of Iraq is a disaster.

By Scott Ritter

12/20/05 "**Aljazeera**" -- The highly vaunted US military machine, laurelled and praised for its historic march on Baghdad in March and April of 2003, today finds itself a broken force, on the defensive in a land that it may occupy in part, but does not control.

The all-out offensive to break the back of the resistance in Falluja has failed, leaving a city destroyed by American firepower, and still very much in the grips of the anti-American fighters.

The same is true of Mosul, Samarra, or any other location where the US military has undertaken "decisive" action against the fighters, only to find that, within days, the fighting has returned, stronger than ever.

And yet, it now appears as if the United States, in an effort to take the offensive against the fighters in Iraq, is

prepared to compound its past mistakes in Iraq by embarking on a new course of action derived from some of the darkest, and most embarrassing moments of America's modern history.

According to press accounts, the Pentagon is considering the organisation, training and equipping of so-called death squads, teams of Iraqi assassins who would be used to infiltrate and eliminate the leadership of the Iraqi resistance.

Called the Salvador Option, in reference to similar US-backed death squads that terrorised the population of El Salvador during the 1980s, the proposed plan actually has as its roots the Phoenix assassination programme undertaken during the Vietnam war, where American-led assassins killed thousands of known or suspected Vietcong collaborators.

Perhaps it is a sign of the desperation felt inside the Pentagon, or an underscoring of the ideological perversity of those in charge, that the US military would draw upon the failed programmes of the past to resolve an insoluble problem of today.

The Salvador Option would not be the first embrace of assassination as a tool of occupation undertaken by the United States in Iraq.

In the months following Paul Bremer's taking over of the Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA) in June 2003, the streets of Baghdad crawled with scores of assassination squads.

Among the more effective and brutal of these units were those drawn from the Badr Brigade, the armed militia of the Shia political party known as the Supreme Council of the Islamic Revolution in Iraq, or SCIRI.

Although not publicly acknowledged, the role played by the various anti-Saddam militias in confronting the residual elements of Saddam's former ruling Baath Party offered a glimpse into what was, and is, an unspoken element of the US policy regarding de-Baathification - let the Iraqis do the dirty work.

SCIRI's efforts to exterminate Baath Party remnants still loyal to Saddam Hussein, or who stand accused of committing crimes against SCIRI or its sympathisers, attracted the attention of the “black” side of the CPA-run de-Baathification efforts – covert operations run by the CIA and elite Special Operations units of the United States military.

Of all the various players in this deadly game, the Badr militia stood out as the most willing and able to take the fight to the Baathist holdouts.

Tipped off by the CPA's covert operatives, the Badr assassination squads killed dozens of Baathists in and around Baghdad.

But the assassination of former Baathists did nothing to pacify Iraq.

The ongoing resistance to the American occupation of Iraq was not founded in the formal structure of the Baath

Party, but rather the complex mixture of tribal and religious motivations which had, since 1995, been blended into the secretive cell structure of the Baath Party.

While the Americans and their SCIRI allies focused on bringing to heel former Baathists, the resistance morphed into a genuine grassroots national liberation movement where strategic planning may very well be the product of former Baathists, but the day-to-day tactical decisions are more likely to be made by tribal shaikhs and local clerics.

The increasing success of the resistance was attributed in part to the failure of the CPA-ordered de-Baathification policy.

In an effort to reverse this trend, Bremer rescinded his de-Baathification programme, and ordered the Badr assassination squads to stand down.

This change of policy direction could not change the reality on the ground in Iraq, however.

The Sunni-based resistance, having been targeted by the Badr assassins, struck back with a vengeance.

In a campaign of targeted assassinations using car bombs and ambushes, the resistance has engaged in its own campaign of terror against the Shia, viewed by the Sunni fighters as being little more than collaborators of the American occupation.

Having started the game of politically motivated assassination, the US has once again found itself trumped by forces inside Iraq it does not understand, and as such will never be able to defeat.

The Salvador Option fails on a number of levels. First and foremost is the moral and ethical one.

While it is difficult at times to understand and comprehend, let alone justify, the tactics used by the Iraqi resistance, history has shown that the tools of remote ambush, instead of a direct assassination, have always been used by freedom fighters when confronting an illegitimate foreign occupier who possesses overwhelming conventional military superiority.

As such, history celebrates the resistance of the French and the Russians when occupied by the Germans during the second world war, the Chinese resistance to Japanese occupation during that same time, or even the decades-long national liberation movement in Vietnam which defeated not only the French and the Americans, but also the illegitimate government these two occupiers attempted to impose on the people of South Vietnam.

History, on the other hand, treats harshly the occupying power which resorts to the use of the tools of terror to subdue an occupied people.

Thus, while it is fine for a French resistance fighter to blow up a German troop train, it is not acceptable for the Germans to burn a French village in retaliation.

History will eventually depict as legitimate the efforts of the Iraqi resistance to destabilise and defeat the American occupation forces and their imposed Iraqi collaborationist government.

And history will condemn the immorality of the American occupation, which has debased the values and ideals of the American people by legitimising torture, rape and murder as a means of furthering an illegal war of aggression.

Ethics aside, the Salvador Option will fail simply because it cannot succeed. In an effort to confront a Sunni-based resistance, the Pentagon proposes that special assassination squads be recruited from the ranks of “loyal” Kurds and Shia.

In the 30 years of Saddam's rule, the Baathist government and its security organs were very successful in infiltrating the ranks of Kurdish and Shia opposition movements.

The Shia and Kurds, on the other hand, have no history of being able to do the same to the Sunni. If anything has emerged as the undisputable truth in post-invasion Iraq, it is that the Iraqi resistance knows Iraq infinitely better than the American occupiers.

If implemented, the Salvador Option will serve as the impetus for all-out civil war. In the same manner that the CPA-backed assassination of Baathists prompted the restructuring and strengthening of the Sunni-led resistance, any effort by US-backed Kurdish and Shia assassination teams to target Sunni resistance leaders will remove all impediments for a general outbreak of ethnic and religious warfare in Iraq.

It is hard as an American to support the failure of American military operations in Iraq. Such failure will bring with it the death and wounding of many American service members, and many more Iraqis.

As an American, I have hoped that there was a way for America to emerge victorious in Iraq, with our national security and honour intact, and Iraq itself a better nation than the one we “liberated”. But it is far too late for this to happen.

We not only invaded Iraq on false pretences, but we perverted the notion of liberation by removing Saddam and his cronies from his palaces, replacing them with American occupiers who have not only kept open Saddam's most notorious prisons, but also the practice of torture, rape and abuse we were supposed to be bringing to an end.

Faced with our inability to come to grips with a popular-based resistance that has grown exponentially over the past year, the best the American policy planners can come up with is to embrace our own form of terrorism, supporting death squads we cannot control and which will only further debase the moral foundation of our nation while slaughtering even more Iraqis.

As an American, I hope and pray that common sense and basic morality prevail in Washington DC, terminating the Salvador Option before it gets off the ground. Failing that, I hope that the programme of US-backed death squads is defeated. That is the most pro-American sentiment I can muster, given the situation as it currently stands.

Scott Ritter was a senior UN arms inspector in Iraq between 1991 and 1998. He is now an independent consultant.

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7 Facts You Might Not Know about the Iraq War
By Michael Schwartz

08/22/06 "**TomDispatch**" -- -- With a tenuous cease-fire between Israel and Lebanon holding, the ever-hotter war in Iraq is once again creeping back onto newspaper front pages and towards the top of the evening news. Before being fully immersed in daily reports of bomb blasts, sectarian violence, and casualties, however, it might be worth considering some of the just-under-the-radar-screen realities of the situation in that country. Here, then, is a little guide to understanding what is likely to be a flood of new Iraqi developments -- a few enduring, but seldom commented upon, patterns central to the dynamics of the Iraq war, as well as to the fate of the American occupation and Iraqi society.

1. The Iraqi Government Is Little More Than a Group of "Talking Heads"
A minimally viable central government is built on at least three foundations: the coercive capacity to maintain order, an administrative apparatus that can deliver government services and directives to society, and the resources to manage these functions. The Iraqi government has none of these attributes -- and no prospect of developing them. It has no coercive capacity. The national army we hear so much about is actually trained and commanded by the Americans, while the police forces are largely controlled by local governments and have few, if any, viable links to the central government in Baghdad. (Only the Special Forces, whose death-squad activities in the capital have lately been in the news, have any formal relationship with the elected government; and they have more enduring ties to the U.S. military that created them and the Shia militias who staffed them.)

Administratively, the Iraqi government has no existence outside Baghdad's heavily fortified Green Zone -- and little presence within it. Whatever local apparatus exists elsewhere in the country is led by local leaders, usually with little or no loyalty to the central government and not dependent on it for resources it doesn't, in any case, possess. In Baghdad itself, this is clearly illustrated in the vast Shiite slum of Sadr city, controlled by Muqtada al-Sadr's Mahdi Army and his elaborate network of political clerics. (Even U.S. occupation forces enter that enormous swath of the capital only in large brigades, braced for significant firefights.) In the major city of the Shia south, Basra, local clerics lead a government that alternately ignores and defies the central government on all policy issues from oil to women's rights; in Sunni cities like Tal Afar and Ramadi, where major battles with the Americans alternate with insurgent control, the government simply has no presence whatsoever. In Kurdistan in the north, the Kurdish leadership maintains full control of all local governments.

As for resources, with 85% of the country's revenues deriving from oil, all you really need to know is that oil-rich Iraq is also suffering from an "acute fuel shortage" (including soaring prices, all-night lines at gas stations, and a deal to get help from neighboring Syria which itself has minimal refining capacity). The almost helpless Iraqi government has had little choice but to accept the dictates of American advisors and of the International

Monetary Fund about exactly how what energy resources exist will be used. Paying off Saddam-era debt, reparations to Kuwait from the Gulf War of 1990, and the needs of the U.S.-controlled national army have had first claim. With what remains so meager that it cannot sustain a viable administrative apparatus in Baghdad, let alone the rest of the country, there is barely enough to spare for the government leadership to line their own pockets.

2. There Is No Iraqi Army

The "Iraqi Army" is a misnomer. The government's military consists of Iraqi units integrated into the U.S.-commanded occupation army. These units rely on the Americans for intelligence, logistics, and -- lacking almost all heavy weaponry themselves -- artillery, tanks, and any kind of airpower. (The Iraqi "Air Force" typically consists of fewer then 10 planes with no combat capability.) The government has no real control over either personnel or strategy.

We can see this clearly in a recent operation in Sadr City, conducted (as news reports tell us) by "Iraqi troops and US advisors" and backed up by U.S. artillery and air power. It was one of an ongoing series of attempts to undermine the Sadrists and their Mahdi army, who have governed the area since the fall of Saddam. The day after the assault, Iraqi premier Nouri Kamel al-Maliki complained about the tactics used, which he labeled "unjustified," and about the fact that neither he, nor his government, was included in the decision-making leading up to the assault. As he put it to an Agence France-Presse, "I reiterate my rejection to [sic] such an operation and it should not be executed without my consent. This particular operation did not have my approval."

This happened because the U.S. has functionally expanded its own forces in Iraq by integrating local Iraqi units into its command structure, while essentially depriving the central government of any army it could use purely for its own purposes. Iraqi units have their own officers, but they always operate with American advisers. As American Ambassador Zalmay Khalilzad put it, "We'll ultimately help them become independent." (Don't hold your breath.)

3. The Recent Decline in American Casualties Is Not a Result of Less Fighting (and Anyway, It's Probably Ending)

At the beginning of August, the press carried reports of a significant decline in U.S. casualties, punctuated with announcements from American officials that the military situation was improving. The figures (compiled by the Brookings Institute) do show a decline in U.S. military deaths (76 in April, 69 in May, 63 in June, and then only 48 in July). But these were offset by dramatic increases in Iraqi military fatalities, which almost doubled in July as the U.S. sent larger numbers of Iraqi units into battle, and as undermanned American units were redeployed from al-Anbar province, the heartland of the Sunni insurgency, to civil-war-torn Baghdad in preparation for a big push to recapture various out-of-control neighborhoods in the capital.

More important, when it comes to long-term U.S. casualties, the trends are not good. In recent months, U.S. units had been pulled off the streets of the capital. But the Iraqi Army units that replaced them proved incapable of controlling Baghdad in even minimal ways. So, in addition, to fighting the Sunni insurgency, American troops are now back on the streets of Baghdad in the midst of a swirling civil war with U.S. casualties likely to rise. In recent

months, there has also been an escalation of the fighting between American forces and the insurgency, independent of the sectarian fighting that now dominates the headlines.

As a consequence, the U.S. has actually increased its troop levels in Iraq (by delaying the return of some units, sending others back to Iraq early, and sending in some troops previously held in reserve in Kuwait). The number of battles (large and small) between occupation troops and the Iraqi resistance has increased from about 70 a day to about 90 a day; and the number of resistance fighters estimated by U.S. officials has held steady at about 20,000. The number of IEDs placed -- the principle weapon targeted at occupation troops (including Iraqi units) -- has been rising steadily since the spring.
The effort by Sunni guerrillas to expel the American army and its allies is more widespread and energetic than at any time since the fall of the Hussein regime.

4. Most Iraqi Cities Have Active and Often Viable Local Governments

Neither the Iraqi government, nor the American-led occupation has a significant presence in most parts of Iraq. This is well-publicized in the three Kurdish provinces, which are ruled by a stable Kurdish government without any outside presence; less so in Shia urban areas where various religio-political groups -- notably the Sadrists, the Supreme Council of Islamic Revolution in Iraq (SCIRI), Da'wa , and Fadhila -- vie for local control, and then organize cities and towns around their own political and religious platforms. While there is often violent friction among these groups -- particularly when the contest for control of an area is undecided -- most cities and towns are largely peaceful as local governments and local populations struggle to provide city services without a viable national economy.

This situation also holds true in the Sunni areas, except when the occupation is actively trying to pacify them. When there is no fighting, local governments dominated by the religious and tribal leaders of the resistance establish the laws and maintain a kind of order, relying for law enforcement on guerrilla fighters and militia members.

All these governments -- Kurdish, Shia and Sunni -- have shown themselves capable of maintaining (often fundamentalist) law and (often quite harsh) order, with little crime and little resistance from the local population. Though often severely limited by the lack of resources from a paralyzed national economy and a bankrupt national government, they do collect the garbage, direct traffic, suppress the local criminal element, and perform many of the other duties expected of local governments.

5. Outside Baghdad, Violence Arrives with the Occupation Army

The portrait of chaos across Iraq that our news generally offers us is a genuine half-truth. Certainly, Baghdad has been plunged into massive and worsening disarray as both the war against the Americans and the civil war have come to be concentrated there, and as the terrifying process of ethnic cleansing has hit neighborhood after neighborhood, and is now beginning to seep into the environs of the capital.

However, outside Baghdad (with the exception of the northern cities of Kirkuk and Mosul, where historic friction among Kurd, Sunni, and Turkman has created a different version of sectarian violence), Iraqi cities tend to be

reasonably ethnically homogeneous and to have at least quasi-stable governments. The real violence often only arrives when the occupation military makes its periodic sweeps aimed at recapturing cities where it has lost all authority and even presence.
This deadly pattern of escalating violence is regularly triggered by those dreaded sweeps, involving brutal, destructive, and sometimes lethal home invasions aimed at capturing or killing suspected insurgents or their supporters. The insurgent response involves the emplacement of ever more sophisticated roadside bombs (known as IEDs) and sniper attacks, aimed at distracting or hampering the patrols. The ensuing firefights frequently involve the use of artillery, tanks, and air power in urban areas, demolishing homes and stores in a neighborhood, which only adds to the bitter resistance and increasing the support for the insurgency.

These mini-wars can last between a few hours and, in Falluja, Ramadi, or other "centers of resistance," a few weeks. They constitute the overwhelming preponderance of the fighting in Iraq. For any city, the results can be widespread death and devastation from which it can take months or years to recover. Yet these are still episodes punctuating a less violent, if increasingly more run-down normalcy.

6. There Is a Growing Resistance Movement in the Shia Areas of Iraq

Lately, the pattern of violence established in largely Sunni areas of Iraq has begun to spread to largely Shia cities, which had previously been insulated from the periodic devastation of American pacification attempts. This ended with growing Bush administration anxiety about economic, religious, and militia connections between local Shia governments and Iran, and with the growing power of the anti-American Sadrist movement, which had already fought two fierce battles with the U.S. in Najaf in 2004 and a number of times since then in Sadr City.

Symptomatic of this change is the increasing violence in Basra, the urban oil hub at the southern tip of the country, whose local government has long been dominated by various fundamentalist Shia political groups with strong ties to Iran. When the British military began a campaign to undermine the fundamentalists' control of the police force there, two British military operatives were arrested, triggering a battle between British soldiers (supported by the Shia leadership of the Iraqi central government) and the local police (supported by local Shia leaders). This confrontation initiated a series of armed confrontations among the various contenders for power in Basra.

Similar confrontations have occurred in other localities, including Karbala, Najaf, Sadr City, and Maysan province. So far no general offensive to recapture the any of these areas has been attempted, but Britain has recently been concentrating its troops outside Basra.

If the occupation decides to use military means to bring the Shia cities back into anything like an American orbit, full-scale battles may be looming in the near future that could begin to replicate the fighting in Sunni areas, including the use of IEDs, so far only sporadically employed in the south. If you think American (and British) troops are overextended now, dealing with internecine warfare and a minority Sunni insurgency, just imagine what a real Shiite insurgency would mean.

7. There Are Three Distinct Types of Terrorism in Iraq, All Directly or Indirectly Connected to the Occupation

Terrorism involves attacking civilians to force them to abandon their support for your enemy, or to drive them away from a coveted territory.

The original terrorists in Iraq were the military and civilian officials of the Bush administration -- starting with their "shock and awe" bombing campaign that destroyed Iraqi infrastructure in order to "undermine civilian morale." The American form of terrorism continued with the wholesale destruction of most of Falluja and parts of other Sunni cities, designed to pacify the "hot beds" of insurgency, while teaching the residents of those areas that, if they "harbor the insurgents," they will surely "suffer the consequences."

At the individual level, this program of terror was continued through the invasions of, and demolishing of, homes (or, in some cases, parts of neighborhoods) where insurgents were believed to be hidden among a larger civilian population, thus spreading the "lesson" about "harboring terrorists" to everyone in the Sunni sections of the country. Generating a violent death rate of at least 18,000 per year, the American drumbeat of terror has contributed more than its share to the recently escalating civilian death toll, which reached a record 3,149 in the official count during July. It is unfortunately accurate to characterize the American occupation of Sunni Iraq as a reign of terror.

The Sunni terrorists like those led by Abu Musab al-Zarqawi have utilized the suicide car bomb to generate the most widely publicized violence in Iraq -- hundreds of civilian casualties each month resulting from attacks on restaurants, markets, and mosques where large number of Shia congregate.

At the beginning of the U.S. occupation, car bombs were nonexistent; they only became common when a tiny proportion of the Sunni resistance movement became convinced that the Shia were the main domestic support for the American occupation. (As far as we can tell, the vast majority of those fighting the Americans oppose such terrorists and have sometimes fought with them.) As al-Qaeda leader Ayman al-Zawahiri wrote, these attacks were justified by "the treason of the Shia and their collusion with the Americans." As if to prove him correct, the number of such attacks tripled to current levels of about 70 per month after the Shia-dominated Iraqi government supported the American devastation of Falluja in November 2004.

The Sunni terrorists work with the same terrorist logic that the Americans have applied in Iraq: Attacks on civilians are meant to terrify them into not supporting the enemy. There is a belief, of course, among the leadership of the Sunni terrorists that, ultimately, only the violent suppression or expulsion of the Shia is acceptable. But as Zawahiri himself stated, the "majority of Muslims don't comprehend this and possibly could not even imagine it." So the practical justification for such terrorism lies in the more immediate association of the Shia with the hated occupation.

The final link in the terrorist chain can also be traced back to the occupation. In January of 2005, Newsweek broke the story that the U.S. was establishing (Shiite) "death squads" within the Iraqi Ministry of Interior, modeled after the assassination teams that the CIA had helped organize in El Salvador during the 1980s. These death squads were intended to assassinate activists and supporters of the Sunni resistance. Particularly after the bombing of the Golden Dome, an important Shia shrine in Samarra, in March 2006, they became a fixture in Baghdad, where thousands of corpses -- virtually all Sunni men -- have been found with signs of torture, including

electric-drill holes, in their bodies and bullet holes in their heads. Here, again, the logic is the same: to use terror to stop the Sunni community from nurturing and harboring both the terrorist car bombers and the anti-American resistance fighters.

While there is disagreement about whether the Americans, the Shia-controlled Iraqi Ministry of Defense, or the Shia political parties should shoulder the most responsibility for loosing these death squads on Baghdad, one conclusion is indisputable: They have earned their place in the ignominious triumvirate of Iraqi terrorism.

One might say that the war has converted one of President Bush's biggest lies into an unimaginably horrible truth: Iraq is now the epicenter of worldwide terrorism.

Where the 7 Facts Lead

With this terror triumvirate at the center of Iraqi society, we now enter the horrible era of ethnic cleansing, the logical extension of multidimensional terror.

When the U.S. toppled the Hussein regime, there was little sectarian sentiment outside of Kurdistan, which had longstanding nationalist ambitions. Even today, opinion polls show that more than two-thirds of Sunnis and Shia stand opposed to the idea of any further weakening of the central government and are not in favor of federation, no less dividing Iraq into three separate nations.

Nevertheless, ethnic cleansing by both Shia and Sunni has become the order of the day in many of the neighborhoods of Baghdad, replete with house burnings, physical assaults, torture, and murder, all directed against those who resist leaving their homes. These acts are aimed at creating religiously homogeneous neighborhoods.

This is a terrifying development that derives from the rising tide of terrorism. Sunnis believe that they must expel their Shia neighbors to stop them from giving the Shiite death squads the names of resistance fighters and their supporters. Shia believe that they must expel their Sunni neighbors to stop them from providing information and cover for car-bombing attacks. And, as the situation matures, militants on both sides come to embrace removal -- period. As these actions escalate, feeding on each other, more and more individuals, caught in a vise of fear and bent on revenge, embrace the infernal logic of terrorism: that it is acceptable to punish everyone for the actions of a tiny minority.

There is still some hope for the Iraqis to recover their equilibrium. All the centripetal forces in Iraq derive from the American occupation, and might still be sufficiently reduced by an American departure followed by a viable reconstruction program embraced by the key elements inside of Iraq. But if the occupation continues, there will certainly come a point -- perhaps already passed -- when the collapse of government legitimacy, the destruction wrought by the war, and the horror of terrorist violence become self-sustaining. If that point is reached, all parties will enter a new territory with incalculable consequences.

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http://www.informationclearinghouse.info/article14657.htm

Let A Thousand Militias Bloom

by A. K. Gupta

04/21/05 "IM" - - In devising a strategy to defeat Iraq's insurgents, the Pentagon may be gaining the upper hand but at the cost of pushing Iraq toward civil war. a report in the *Wall Street Journal,* from Feb. 16 revealed that "pop-up militias" are proliferating in Iraq. Not only is the U.S. aware of these illegal militias, but the Pentagon is arming, training and funding them for use them in counter-insurgency operations.

Most disturbing, one militia in particular – the "special police commandos" – is being used throughout Iraq and has been singled out by a U.S. general as conducting death squad strikes known as the "Salvador option."

Greg Jaffe, the Journal reporter, identified at least six such militias. Yet these militias owe their allegiance not to the Iraqi people or state, but to their self-appointed leaders and associated politicians such as interim Prime Minister Iyad Allawi. Even the commander of U.S. forces in the Middle East, Gen. John P. Abizaid, admitted to Congress on March 1 that such militias are "destabilizing."

Of these militias, at least three are linked to Allawi. Jaffe writes, "First came the Muthana Brigade, a unit formed by the order of... Allawi." The second is the Defenders of Khadamiya, referring to a Shiite shrine on the outskirts of Baghdad, which appears to be "closely aligned with prominent Shiite cleric Hussein al Sadr," who ran on Allawi's ticket in the January elections.

The leader of the special police commandos, Gen. Adnan Thavit, participated in the disastrous 1996 coup against Saddam Hussein that Allawi coordinated. Thavit was jailed and subsequently released shortly before the 2003 U.S. invasion. He is also the uncle of Iraq's interim minister of the interior, under which the commandos operate.

New Boss = Old Boss

A recent Human Rights Watch study on torture in Iraq noted that Al-Nahdhah, a Iraqi newspaper, reported on June 21 that the interior ministry "appointed a new security adviser to assist in the establishment of a new general security directorate [GSD] modeled on the erstwhile General Security Directorate... one of the agencies of the

Saddam Hussein government dissolved by the CPA in May 2003." That security advisor was "Major General 'Adnan Thabet al-Samarra'i." (Like most Arabic words, Thavit's name is translated into English with various spellings.)

Jane's Intelligence Digest commented at the time that the GSD, "will include former members of Saddam Hussein's feared security services, collectively known as the Mukhabarat. These former Ba'athists and Saddam loyalists will be expected to hunt down their colleagues currently organizing the insurgency."

Lt. Gen. David Petraeus, who heads the mammoth U.S. effort to create Iraq's myriad security forces, called the commandos "a horse to back." And Petraeus has done so by providing it with "money to fix up its base and buy vehicles, ammunition, radios and more weapons."

The special police commandos have also received special treatment from the U.S. occupation. A State Department report to Congress from Jan. 5 noted that at the request of the Iraqi Ministry of the Interior, "billeting space" was provided for 1,500 commandos in the Baghdad Public Safety Academy.

Bigger than the british

In terms of numbers, a column by David Ignatius in the Feb. 25 Washington Post notes that Thavit "commands a force of about 10,000 men," which would make them larger than the British military.

The commandos have been used extensively, first last October in the assault on Samara that was called a "model" for how to retake a city from insurgents (but which is stilled roiled by regular attacks). The commandos have also become a fixture in major cities such as Ramadi and Mosul. In Ramadi, The Stars and Stripes describes the commandos as "the Iraqi forces that might soon be responsible for security in the city."

A report in Dec. 25 issue of The Advisor – a Pentagon publication with the tagline "Iraq's Official Weekly Command Information Reporter" – stated that the "Special Police Commandos have been deployed all over Iraq to hunt down insurgents."

This "hunt" seems to include death squad operations. Retired Gen. Wayne Downing, the former head of all U.S. special operations forces, appeared on NBC's Today show on Jan. 10 to discuss a Newsweek report about the Salvador option. The reference is to the extensive use of death squads by El Salvador's military during its war against the left in the 1980s. Downing called it a "very valid tactic" that has been employed "since we started the war back in March of 2003." Downing added, "We have special police commandos now of the Iraqi forces which conduct these kind of strike operations."

At the highest levels, White House officials consider the special police commandos as the leading edge against the insurgency. In hearings before the Senate on Feb. 16, Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld said the commandos are among "forces that are going to have the greatest leverage on suppressing and eliminating the insurgency."

By all accounts, the insurgency is still very active, conducting up to 60 strikes a day. But one key indicator of its effectiveness – U.S. combat deaths – shows a marked decline since the razing of Fallujah last November. In that

month, some 126 U.S. troops died in combat, more than four per day on average. By March, combat deaths had declined by more than 75 percent.

Sweeping countless thousands of Sunni Arab males off the streets has had an effect. The prison population under U.S. control alone has exploded to over 10,000. The insurgents have responded by shifting their targets, concentrating attacks more on Iraqi security forces and they have intensified economic sabotage, crippling the electrical and petroleum infrastructure.

U.S. Marines units have taken the militia strategy to a new level: by creating their own. In a recent sweep through Al Anbar province, the heartland of the insurgency, The 7th Marines Regiment brought with the Iraqi Freedom Guard, a 61-man unit set up in January and paid $400 a month each, according to a Reuters report. During the same operation, Marines of the 23rd Regiment were accompanied by 20 members of a special forces unit called the Freedom Fighters. The Christian Science Monitor described them as Shiites from the southern city of Basra, with “little love between them and the Sunni Arab citizens of Anbar.”

Despite being squeezed, no one is predicting an end to the insurgency. One U.S. general recently noted that it takes on average nine years to defeat an insurgency. Even if the rebellion is contained to “manageable” levels for the Pentagon, meaning a low rate of combat deaths, that does not mean the resistance will end. U.S. forces long ago lost the battle for hearts and minds.

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Iraq 'death squad caught in act'

Iraq has launched an investigation into claims by the US military that an Iraqi interior ministry "death squad" has been targeting Sunni Arab Iraqis.

16 Feb 2006.

The probe comes after a US general revealed the arrest of 22 policemen allegedly on a mission to kill a Sunni.

"We have found one of the death squads. They are part of the police force," US Maj Gen Joseph Peterson said.

Sunnis have long accused Iraqi forces of operating death squads - but the claims have never been substantiated.

Iraqi deputy interior minister Maj Gen Hussein Kamal said his ministry had set up an inquiry.

"The interior minister has formed an investigation committee to learn more about the Sunni person and those 22 men, particularly whether they work for the interior ministry or claim to belong to the ministry," he told the Associated Press news agency.

Hundreds of Sunni Arab Iraqis have been found dead since the 2003 war in what appear to have been extra-judicial killings.

On Wednesday, the bodies of four unidentified men were found in Baghdad's Shia district of Shula. They had been handcuffed, blindfolded and shot in the head.

Iraqi insurgents have also often used a similar tactic against Iraqis working with international forces or the Iraqi government.

Detained

Gen Peterson, who is in charge of training the Iraqi police, told the Chicago Tribune on Wednesday that US forces had stumbled across the first evidence of death squads within the interior ministry.



"I think there are many people inside the interior ministry involved with these deaths or giving the uniforms of colleagues to criminals"
Iraqi Human Rights Minister Narmin Uthman

The 22 interior ministry traffic policemen, dressed in police commando uniforms, were arrested in late January at an Iraqi army checkpoint in northern Baghdad and asked what they were doing.

They told soldiers they were taking a Sunni man away to be shot dead.

"The amazing thing is... they tell you exactly what they're going to do," Gen Peterson said.

Militias

Gen Peterson said US forces were holding four of the men at the Abu Ghraib prison and that the 18 other men were being detained at an Iraqi jail.

The Sunni man, who was accused of murder, is also being detained.

Subsequent investigations found the four men in US custody are linked to the Badr Organisation, the armed militia of one of Iraq's main Shia parties, the Supreme Council for the Islamic Revolution in Iraq.

But Gen Peterson said he was convinced Iraqi Interior Minster Bayan Jabr, a member of Sciri, had no knowledge of or involvement in the death squads.

"Who are these guys? That's what the minister is trying to find out," he said.

"They are discrediting him and his organisation. He wants to find these guys. He does not support them."

But Gen Peterson said he believed other death squads were operating within the Iraqi security forces.

"It's an issue of loyalties, of allegiance," he said. "If you're still wearing your Badr T-shirt under your uniform, that's a problem."

'Official help'

Iraqi Human Rights Minister Narmin Uthman said she believed lower-level officials were helping the death squads.

"These officials are helping the criminals by informing them on where targeted people are going or where people are living," she told AP.

A spokesman for the country's main Sunni Arab party, the Iraqi Islamic Party, backed the launch of the investigation.
"For a very long time we have been talking about such violations and we have been telling the interior ministry officials that there are squads that raid houses and arrest people who are found later executed in different parts of the capital," Nasser al-Ani said.

http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/middle_east/4719252.stm

Journalist killed after investigating US-backed death squads in Iraq
By James Cogan
1 July 2005

On June 24, Yasser Salihee, an Iraqi special correspondent for the news agency Knight Ridder, was killed by a single bullet to the head as he approached a checkpoint that had been thrown up near his home in western Baghdad by US and Iraqi troops. It is believed that the shot was fired by an American sniper. According to eyewitnesses, no warning shots were fired.

The US military has announced it is conducting an investigation into Salihee's killing. Knight Ridder has already declared, however, that "there's no reason to think that the shooting had anything to do with his reporting work". In fact, his last assignment gives reason to suspect that it was.

Over the past month, Salihee had been gathering evidence that US-backed Iraqi forces have been carrying out extra-judicial killings of alleged members and supporters of the anti-occupation resistance. His investigation followed a feature in the *New York Times* magazine in May, detailing how the US military had modeled the Iraqi interior ministry police commandos, known as the Wolf Brigade, on the death squads unleashed in the 1980s to crush the left-wing insurgency in El Salvador.

The Wolf Brigade was recruited by US operatives and the US-installed interim government headed by Iyad Allawi during 2004. A majority of its officers and personnel served in Saddam Hussein's special forces and Republican Guard—veterans of killings, torture and repression. The unit has been used against the resistance in rebellious cities such as Mosul and Samarra, and, over the past six weeks, has played a prominent role in the massive crackdown ordered by the Iraqi government in Baghdad codenamed "Operation Lightning".

On June 27, Knight Ridder published the results of its inquiry in an article jointly written by Salihee and correspondent Tom Lasseter. The journalists "found more than 30 examples in less than a week" of corpses turning up in Baghdad morgues of people who were last seen being detained by the police commandos.

The men, according to the central Baghdad morgue director Faik Baqr, had "been killed in a methodical fashion". The article reported: "Their hands had been tied or handcuffed behind their backs, their eyes were blindfolded and they appeared to have been tortured. In most cases, the dead men looked as if they'd been whipped with a cord, subjected to electric shocks or beaten with a blunt object and shot to death, often with single bullets to their heads."

A grocer in west Baghdad told Salihee that he had been detained by police with a man named Anwar Jassim on May 13. "When we were in detention, they put blindfolds and handcuffs on us. On the second day the soldiers were saying 'He's dead'. Later we found out it was Anwar." According to the medical reports at the Yarmuk morgue where police dumped his body, Jassim had a "bullet wound in the back of his head and cuts and bruises on his abdomen, back and neck."

Police commandos reportedly told the morgue director to leave the corpse "so that dogs could eat it, because he's terrorist and he deserves it".

In a second case, a brigadier-general in the Iraqi interior ministry related that his brother had been detained during a raid on May 14, in a working class Sunni suburb in Baghdad's west. His body was found the next day bearing signs of torture. Witnesses told the general that the abductors "came in white police Toyota Land Cruisers, wore police commando uniforms, flak vests and helmets" and were armed with 9mm Glock pistols.
Glock sidearms are used by many US law enforcement agencies and have been supplied to Iraqi security forces by the US military.

The article also cited a third case. The body of Saadi Khalif was brought to Yarmuk morgue by police commandos several days after he was taken from his home by police on June 10. Saadi's brother told Knight Ridder: "The doctor told us he was choked and tortured before they shot him. He looked like he had been dragged by a car."
An article in the British *Financial Times* on June 29 provided further evidence of police commando atrocities. Mustafa Mohammed Ali, from the western Baghdad suburb of Abu Ghraib, told the newspaper he was detained by the Wolf Brigade on May 22, during the build-up to Operation Lightning. He alleged that he was held for 26 days.

The article reported: "He spent the first day in a barbed wire enclosure with hundreds of other detainees, without food, water or toilet facilities... On the fourth day, the interrogations began. Mr Ali says Wolf Brigade commandos attached electrical wires to his ear and his genitals, and generated a current with a hand-cranked military telephone."

According to the figures given to the *Financial Times*, only 22 of the 474 people seized from their homes during the Wolf Brigade sweep in the Abu Ghraib area are still being held. Those released allege they suffered systematic abuse. "Mass detentions and indiscriminate torture seem to be the main tools deployed to crush an insurgency that could last 'five, six, eight, 10, 12 years' according to Donald Rumsfeld, US defence secretary," the newspaper commented.

In light of the evidence gathered by Salihee, significant discrepancies in the official figures for Operation Lightning in Baghdad raise further concerns about the fate of detainees. In early June, the Iraqi government reported that 1,200 had been detained. Just days later on June 6, this was revised downward to just 887, with no explanation. Some of the deaths referred to in the Knight Ridder article coincide with this period.

Suspicions of wholesale killings

The revelations about the conduct of the Wolf Brigade lend credibility to the claims made by Max Fuller, in a feature headlined "For Iraq, 'The Salvador Option' Becomes Reality" and published by the Centre for Research on Globalisation.

Over the past nine months, a terrifying new development in Iraq has been the discovery of dozens of bodies dumped in rubbish heaps, rivers or abandoned buildings. In most cases, the people had suffered torture and mutilation before being killed by a single shot to the head. The US military has consistently reported that the victims were members of the Iraqi army or police. The media has universally reported the mass killings as the work of anti-occupation terrorists.

Fuller noted, however: "What is particularly striking is that many of those killings have taken place since the police commandos became operationally active and often correspond with areas where they have been deployed." In Mosul, for example, dozens of men were detained by the commandos last November, as part of a US-led operation to bring the city back under occupation control. Over the following weeks, more than 150 tortured and executed bodies were found. In Samarra, dozens of bodies appeared in nearby Lake Thartar in the wake of operations by the commandos in that city.

From February through to late April, more than 100 bodies were recovered from the Tigris River south of Baghdad—one of the most rebellious areas of the country. The Iraqi government initially claimed they were villagers who had been kidnapped by insurgents in the village of Maidan. This has since been discredited. The victims are from a range of towns and villages, including Kut in the north and Basra in the south. Police in the area told the *San Francisco Chronicle* that many of the dead had been "motorists passing through the area when stopped by masked men bearing Kalashnikov rifles at impromptu checkpoints".

Other killings have been discovered in Baquaba and the Syrian border town of Qaim in the aftermath of counter-insurgency operations by US forces and their Iraqi allies. Fuller also noted the suspicions surrounding the assassination of well over 200 university academics, most of whom were opponents of the US occupation of Iraq.

Dozens of bodies have been found over the past two months in Baghdad. In May, the Association of Muslim Scholars (AMS)—the main public Sunni organisation opposed to the occupation—directly accused the Wolf Brigade of having "arrested imams and the guardians of some mosques, tortured and killed them, and then got rid of their bodies in a garbage dump in Shaab district" of Baghdad. AMS secretary general Hareth al-Dhari declared at the time: "This is state terrorism by the Minister of the Interior."

The very existence of the Wolf Brigade underscores the criminality of the US occupation and the utter fraud of the Bush administration claims to be bringing "liberation" and "democracy" to Iraq. Many of the commandos would have been involved in murder and torture on behalf of Saddam Hussein's regime. The American military deliberately recruited them in order to make use of their experience in mass repression and has directly modeled their operations on those of right-wing death squads in Central America.

The main US advisor to the Wolf Brigade from the time of its formation until April 2005 was James Steele. Steele's own biography, promoting him for the US lecture circuit, states that "he commanded the US military group in El Salvador during the height of the guerilla war" and "was credited with training and equipping what was acknowledged to be the best counter-terrorist force in the region". In a 12-year campaign of murder and repression, the Salvadoran units, trained and advised by people like Steele, killed over 70,000 people.

In his speech on June 28, George Bush declared his administration was working with the Iraqi interior and defence ministries to "improve their capabilities to coordinate anti-terrorist operations" and "develop their command and control structures". The evidence is beginning to emerge that this means paying and equipping former Baathist killers to terrorise, torture and murder Iraqis who are believed to have links to the popular resistance, which an unnamed US analyst estimated for the June 27 edition of *Newsweek* had "as many as 400,000 auxiliaries and support personnel".

The killing of journalists seeking to document or expose allegations of state-organised murder has accompanied every dirty war against a civilian population. Since the US occupation of Iraq began, dozens of reporters, cameramen and other media workers have been killed by American-led forces in suspicious circumstances that were never independently investigated.

Two more Iraqi journalists have been killed in the days since Yasser Salihee's death. On June 26, Maha Ibrahim, a news editor with a television station operated by the anti-occupation Iraqi Islamic Party, was shot dead when US troops opened fire on her car as she and her husband drove to work. Two days later, Ahmad Wail Bakri, a program director for Iraqi al-Sharqiya television was killed by American troops as he reportedly tried to drive around a traffic accident in Baghdad.

http://www.wsws.org/articles/2005/jul2005/iraq-j01_prn.shtml

Iraq's Death Squads
Sunday, December 4, 2005;

OF ALL THE bloodshed in Iraq, none may be more disturbing than the campaign of torture and murder being conducted by U.S.-trained government police forces. Reports last week in the Los Angeles Times and New York Times chronicled how Iraqi Interior Ministry commando and police units have been infiltrated by two Shiite militias, which have been conducting ethnic cleansing and rounding up Sunnis suspected of supporting the insurgency. Hundreds of bodies have been appearing along roadsides and in garbage dumps, some with acid burns or with holes drilled in them. According to the searing account by Solomon Moore of the Los Angeles Times, "the Baghdad morgue reports that dozens of bodies arrive at the same time on a weekly basis, including scores of corpses with wrists bound by police handcuffs." The reports followed a raid two weeks ago by U.S. troops on a

clandestine Baghdad prison run by the Interior Ministry, where some 170 men, most of them Sunni and most of them starved or tortured, were found.

The danger this development poses to Iraq, and to the prospects of a successful end to the U.S. mission there, ought to be obvious. A dirty war conducted by the Iraqi government against one ethnic group will make civil war inevitable. It will render impossible a political accord among Shiites, Sunnis and Kurds, while increasing the likelihood that Iraq will splinter. U.S. commanders will be unable to hand responsibility off to Iraqi forces without inviting a bloodbath, and the training mission that President Bush described at length in his speech on Wednesday will be utterly discredited. If there is to be any chance of achieving Mr. Bush's goals of a united and democratic Iraq that protects the rights of its minorities, the state-sponsored death squads and torture chambers must be dismantled.

Once again, however, Defense Secretary Donald H. Rumsfeld is ignoring a critical threat. Just as he dismissed the insurgency

in its formative months as a few "deadenders" and minimized the systematic breakdown of U.S. discipline in the handling of foreign prisoners as isolated freelancing, Mr. Rumsfeld now pretends not even to know about the government death squads. In a press conference last week, he called the reports "unverified comments." This despite the facts that U.S. troops uncovered the clandestine prison and that officials from the Army, FBI, Justice Department and U.S. Embassy are participating in an investigation.

Worse, Mr. Rumsfeld maintained that "the United States does not have a responsibility" to do anything about the crimes of the police forces it established and trained, other than "report it." Even the man he selected to be chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Marine Corps Gen. Peter Pace, could not support such an irresponsible position. Standing alongside Mr. Rumsfeld, he asserted that "it is absolutely the responsibility of every U.S. service member, if they see inhumane treatment being conducted, to intervene to stop it."

If Mr. Rumsfeld's view prevails, Mr. Bush's latest "strategy for victory" in Iraq will be fatally undermined. Many of the death squads are run by the Badr Organization, which is the military wing of the leading party in Iraq's Shiite-led government, the Supreme Council for the Islamic Revolution in Iraq. Its leader, Abdul Aziz Hakim, not only refused to acknowledge any wrongdoing in an interview last month with the Post's Ellen Knickmeyer, but asserted that U.S. forces were tying Iraqi hands and should get out of the way so that even tougher tactics could be adopted. Should that happen, any hope for peace in Iraq will be lost.

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http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2005/12/03/AR2005120300881_pf.html

Iraq 'failing to tackle death squads'



The aftermath of a Baghdad bomb attack - a study published in the Lancet estimates that 655,000 Iraqis have died as a result of the war. Photograph: Getty Images

Peter Beaumont in Baghdad
Friday September 29, 2006
The Guardian

Senior US officials have accused the new Iraqi government - which they previously championed - of failing to deal with the scourge of sectarian death squads, which are dragging the country into civil war.

Fresh figures published yesterday show that more than 250,000 Iraqis have been displaced by the sectarian violence since February. The details emerged in a week which, say US officials, has seen the highest number of suicide bombings recorded - half of them aimed at US-led forces.

As thousands of Iraqi and US troops continued to conduct cordon-and-search operations across the capital, a senior US officer for the first time publicly questioned prime minister Nouri al-Maliki's tactics for quelling the sectarian violence.

"We have to fix this militia issue. We can't have armed militias competing with Iraq's security forces. But I have to trust the prime minister to decide when it is that we do that," said Lieutenant General Peter Chiarelli, the second-highest-ranking American military official in Baghdad.

His comments echoed those of Major General James Thurman, commander of US military forces in Baghdad, who said last week he believed the question of militias was "a problem that the [Iraqi] government must deal with immediately".
Other senior US officials have begun warning that if the Iraqi government does not take a lead in disarming the militias, the US military might have to do so.

Despite a massive military effort in Baghdad to clear no-go areas of militants, much of the effort has focused on strongholds of Sunni fighters, and has so far had no impact on the slaughter. Instead, a record 7,000 Iraqis have died in the last two months alone. To add to US gloom it was revealed yesterday that the Bush administration is spending $2bn (£1bn) a week on the campaign in Iraq.

The latest political crisis has come as Iraq faces an escalating security crisis on three fronts: from the nationalist-inspired resistance to the US-led occupation, from al-Qaida and other jihadist groups which are behind most of the suicide attacks, and from a sectarian conflict between Shia and Sunni.
The lack of progress on disarming the militia death squads has been a source of growing tension between the US military and the Iraqi government. That frustration has focused in particular on an agreement between Mr Maliki's government and Jaish al-Mahdi, the militia of the Shia Sadr organisation, whose members are blamed for widespread sectarian murders.

Under the understanding, US forces have been instructed not to conduct aggressive military operations in Sadr City, Jaish al-Mahdi's stronghold, leading to accusations that a safe haven has been created for death squads.

Anecdotal evidence has emerged that within Sadr City, clerics and secretive sharia committees have been involved in "legitimising" the killings of Sunnis suspected of being involved in anti-Shia terror. It is said they are at times presiding over kangaroo courts before executions.
According to US officers interviewed by the Guardian, the decision not to confront the major source of the death squads was supported initially by the US because of fears of a full-scale battle with the militia in Sadr City.

"We are talking Berlin in '45 or Stalingrad," said one officer. "That is the conundrum. There is an unwillingness to tackle the problem head-on, but also a recognition that if we don't tackle the militias, death squad activities can only grow."

Instead, a decision was reached to try to bring political pressure to bear on the Sadr organisation, whose parliamentary bloc is crucial in supporting Mr Maliki's government, to bring its militia - illegal under the Iraqi constitution - into line. But with growing doubts over how much the Sadr organisation's leader, the firebrand preacher Moqtada al-Sadr, actually controls the factions within Jaish al-Mahdi, concerns are now growing about the wisdom of that policy.

"There are fractures politically inside Sadr's movement, many of whom don't find him to be sufficiently radical now that he has taken a political course of action," said a senior coalition intelligence official who spoke to reporters in Baghdad.

Sources close to Mr Maliki, defended the policy of political engagement with Jaish al-Mahdi and blamed Iraqi politicians with an interest in seeing Mr Maliki's government fail for fuelling the sense of crisis.

In a separate development a tape emerged yesterday from al-Qaida's leader in Iraq which said that 4,000 foreign insurgents had been killed since the US-led invasion in 2003. The man, who identified himself as Abu Hamza al-Muhajir - also known as Abu Ayyub al-Masri - called for chemical and nuclear weapons experts to join the insurgency by targeting large US bases in Iraq.
http://www.guardian.co.uk/Iraq/Story/0,,1883854,00.html

AlterNet
The Mix is the Message

Government Death Squads Ravaging Baghdad
By Dahr Jamail and Ali Al-Fadhily, IPS News
Posted on October 23, 2006.
http://www.alternet.org/story/43335/

Death squads from the Ministry of Interior posing as Iraqi police are killing more people than ever in the capital, emerging evidence shows.

The death toll is high -- in all 1,536 bodies were brought to the Baghdad morgue in September. The health ministry announced last month that it will build two new morgues in Baghdad to take their capacity to 250 bodies a day.

Many fear a government hand in more killings to come. The U.S. military has revealed that the 8th Iraqi Police Unit was responsible for the Oct. 1 kidnapping of 26 Sunni food factory workers in the Amil quarter in southwest Baghdad. The bodies of ten of them were later found in Abu Chir neighbourhood in the capital.
Minister for the Interior Jawad al-Bolani announced he is suspending the police unit from official duties, and confining it to base until an investigation is completed.
But sections of the ministry appear responsible for the abductions and killing. Ministry of Interior vehicles were used for the kidnapping in this case, and most men conducting the raid wore Iraqi police uniforms, except for a few who wore black death squad 'uniforms', witnesses said.

The leader of the police unit is under house arrest and faces interrogation for this and other crimes, according to an official announcement.

"It is for sure that they did it," one of the victim's neighbours said on condition of anonymity. "The tortured bodies were found the second day. They came in their official police cars; it is not the first time that they did something like this. They do it all over Baghdad, and we hope they will get proper punishment this time."
Men of the police unit meanwhile do not face imminent punishment. "They are going to be rehabilitated and brought back to service," director-general of the Iraqi police Adnan Thabit said.

The Iraqi Islamic Party, the largest Sunni party, blamed militias with ties to the government and the U.S. military. "The Iraqi Islamic Party asks how could 26 people, women among them, have been transported from Amil to Abu Chir through all those Iraqi and U.S. army checkpoints and patrols," it said in a statement.
The U.S. military has denied any involvement in the killings.

General Yassin al-Dulaimi, deputy minister for the interior, has said on Iraqi television several times that death squads are composed mainly of Iraqi police and army units. His comments reflect differing allegiance and agendas even within the Shia bloc.

General Dulaimi has been trying for long to expose the organised criminal gangs that have been controlling the ministry since its formation -- a formation that was overseen by U.S. authorities.

Dulaimi says he does not believe that the Shia Badr organisation, a large, well-armed and funded militia, has complete control over his ministry. But most residents of Baghdad believe that Badr has complete control over the Baghdad Order Maintenance police force, and use this force to carry out sectarian murders. This force is one of several official security teams in Baghdad.

The force is led by Mehdi al-Gharrawi, who also led similar security units during the U.S.- led attack on Fallujah in November 2004.

"All criminals who survived the Fallujah crisis after committing genocide and other war crimes were granted higher ranks," Major Amir Jassim from the ministry of defence said. "I and many of my colleagues were not rewarded because we disobeyed orders to set fire to people's houses (in Fallujah) after others looted them." Jassim said the looting and burning of homes in Fallujah during the November siege was ordered from the ministries of interior and defence.

"Now they want to do the same things they did in Fallujah in all Sunni areas so that they ignite a civil war in Iraq," said Jassim, referring to the Shia-dominated ministries. "A civil war is the only guarantee for them to stay in power, looting such incredible amounts of money."

Another official with the ministry of defence, Muntather al-Samarraii, said that both Iran and "collaborators" within the Ministry of Interior are to blame for the widespread sectarian killings.
"I have lists of thousands of corruption cases from within my ministry, and other files to expose to the world," he said, "But the world is not listening. When it does, I am afraid it is going to be too late."

A police officer in Samarraii's office, speaking on condition of anonymity, said that he believed that murderers would not be punished for their crimes.

"They will reward them, believe me, and give them higher ranks," he said. "This is a country that will never stand back on its feet as long as these killers are in power. And the Americans are supporting them by allowing their convoys to move during curfew hours."

While there is little evidence of direct U.S. involvement, questions have arisen over what the U.S. forces have done -- or not done -- to encourage such killings.
A UN human rights report released September last year held interior ministry forces responsible for an organised campaign of detentions, torture and killings. It reported that special police commando units accused of carrying out the killings were recruited from Shia Badr and Mehdi militias, and trained by U.S. forces.

Retired Col. James Steele, who served as advisor on Iraqi security forces to then U.S. Ambassador John Negroponte supervised the training of these forces.

Steele was commander of the U.S. military advisor group in El Salvador 1984-86, while Negroponte was U.S. ambassador to nearby Honduras 1981-85. Negroponte was accused of widespread human rights violations by the Honduras Commission on Human Rights in 1994. The Commission reported the torture and disappearance of at least 184 political workers.

The violations Negroponte oversaw in Honduras were carried out by operatives trained by the CIA, according to a CIA working group set up in 1996 to look into the U.S. role in Honduras.

The CIA records document that his "special intelligence units," better known as "death squads," comprised CIA-trained Honduran armed units which kidnapped, tortured and killed thousands of people suspected of supporting leftist guerrillas.
Robert Parry's new book is Secrecy & Privilege: Rise of the Bush Dynasty from Watergate to Iraq."

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View this story online at: http://www.alternet.org/story/43335/

Iraq: End Interior Ministry Death Squads

Police Must Be Held Accountable for Killings

(New York, October 29, 2006) – The Iraqi government must move quickly to prosecute all Ministry of Interior personnel responsible for "death squad" killings in Baghdad and elsewhere, Human Rights Watch said today.

"Evidence suggests that Iraqi security forces are involved in these horrific crimes, and thus far the government has not held them accountable," said Sarah Leah Whitson, director of Human Rights Watch's Middle East division. "The Iraqi government must stop giving protection to security forces responsible for abduction, torture and murder."

Every month, hundreds of people are abducted, tortured and killed by what many believe are death squads that include security forces. To terrorize the population, the killers often dump the mutilated corpses in public areas.

Human Rights Watch welcomed the recent suspension from duties of the 8th Iraqi Police Unit pending an investigation into their complicity in abductions and killings. The US military has claimed that the unit was responsible for the October 1 kidnapping of 26 Sunni food factory workers in southwest Baghdad, 10 of whom were later found dead. The news agency Inter Press Service reported that the unit used Ministry of Interior vehicles and, according to witnesses, some wore black "death squad" uniforms.

"The investigation into the 8th Iraqi Police Unit is only a first step," said Whitson. "It is vital that the government get the evidence to bring criminal prosecutions against those responsible, whatever their rank."

The Ministry of Interior is responsible for the country's security forces, some of which have close ties to the two principal Shi`a militias – the Mahdi Army and the Badr Forces. These security forces are believed to be responsible for numerous sectarian killings, operating in some cases as death squads in Baghdad and other provinces. It is not clear to what extent the ministry controls these security forces or whether they are under the effective control of the militias.

Human Rights Watch has examined scores of bodies at the Medico-Legal Institute in Baghdad over the past two years that appear to have been victims of execution-style killings, often preceded by torture. Police bring bodies of people killed in violent attacks to the institute in cases requiring criminal investigation. Victims' family members sometimes have evidence, such as eyewitness accounts of a victim's arrest, that Ministry of Interior security forces were involved in the killing. In addition, statements by ministry officials and information from international police advisers also point to direct participation or complicity of government security forces in these killings.

Human Rights Watch said that the failure of the Iraqi government to properly vet police recruits, establish monitoring and accountability mechanisms, and address reports of police abuses have contributed to the crimes

of the security forces.

By the fall of 2004, a review of the country's police forces by international advisers and the interior ministry deemed between 20,000 and 30,000 police personnel "unsuitable" for the job, but did not remove them from service. The review, which examined police recruitment practices under the Coalition Provisional Authority, showed that some ministry personnel had no basic policing skills and in some cases were completely illiterate.

While Iraqi officials and international advisers made efforts to tackle wide-scale corruption among security and police forces, they gave low priority to establishing monitoring mechanisms and holding accountable those suspected of having abused detainees in their custody.

"Both Iraqi officials and their international advisers are responsible for the lack of effective mechanisms to monitor the post-training conduct of law enforcement personnel," said Whitson.

Since the official end of the US military occupation in June 2004, successive Iraqi governments have failed to adequately address continuing human rights abuses perpetrated by the security forces, including arbitrary arrest, prolonged detention without due process, and wide-spread torture. As a result, a climate of impunity has prevailed.

In January 2005, Human Rights Watch reported on the routine and systematic abuse of detainees in the custody of the Ministry of Interior. Human Rights Watch raised these issues of abuse repeatedly with the relevant governments over the past two years, but with little effect. Since then, Multinational Force and Iraqi investigations have uncovered horrific abuse of detainees in at least two major interior ministry facilities. While the government ordered investigations in these instances, it has never publicly revealed its findings. Worse, it continues to obstruct the pursuit of criminal proceedings against alleged perpetrators.

"The government has consistently ignored abuses by its security forces in hopes that they will bring the violence rampant in Iraq under control," said Whitson. "Today, we know that these forces are a primary source of the violent crime in the country."

http://hrw.org/english/docs/2006/10/29/iraq14473.htm

Iraq's Death Squads: An Instrument Of The Occupation

By Ghali Hassan
Global Research, December 7, 2006

On November 14, 2006 militias and death squads dressed as police commandos kidnapped up to 150 staff and visitors in broad daylight raid – one of daily raids throughout Iraq – on the Higher Education Ministry annexe in central Baghdad. Although some hostages have been released, the fate of others is unknown. It is alleged that large number of the hostages have been tortured and others were murdered. The totality of the raids, kidnapping,

torture, ongoing civilian massacres and murder were part of the illegal and racist war of aggression perpetrated by the U.S. and Britain against a defenceless nation in disregard of International Law and contempt for International institutions.

Let me stating the obvious. The U.S. did not invade Iraq to establish "democracy" and "free Iraqis". The U.S. invaded and destroyed Iraq in order to humiliate and divide Muslims – Arabs in particular –, protect Israel's Zionist expansion and control Iraq's natural wealth. So, the U.S.-imposed democracy by force is fraud. 'Democracy is like a plant; it grows from bottom up, not from top down'. The U.S. sabotage of democracy in Palestine and U.S. support for Israel's criminal destruction of Lebanon are just two current examples of U.S. love for democracy. Also the idea that the U.S. and its allies are in Iraq to stabilise the situation is a falsehood. Destabilisation was one of the aims of U.S. foreign policy. The unprovoked war of aggression and the continuing U.S. presence in Iraq, including the illegal building of U.S. military bases and the largest C.I.A. station in the world on Iraqi soil, are major destabilising factors. The U.S. objectives have always been to weaken Iraq, divide the people and control Iraq behind a façade of corrupt stooges, with poorly trained and poorly armed army and police.

Long before the invasion, the U.S. and its allies were involved in the training and arming of tens of thousands of militias and anti-Iraq collaborators....

In "Let a Thousand Militias Bloom" , Arun Gupta writes that '*the U.S. government is not only aware of these illegal militias but is arming, training and funding them for use in their counter-insurgency operations*'. According to Greg Jaffe of the Wall Street Journal, the "special police commandos" – is being used throughout Iraq and has been conducting criminal assassinations known as the "Salvador option" with the full knowledge of U.S. forces. "Pound for pound, though, they are the toughest force we've got", Col. Dean Franklin, a senior officer in Gen. David Petraeus's command told Greg Jaffe (WSJ, February 16, 2005). The occupying forces have also succeeded in turning one militia group against the other using the civilian population as a fodder. "And it's all happening under the eyes of US commanders, who seem unwilling or unable to intervene", revealed Deborah Davies in a special Channel 4 investigation, 'Iraq's Death Squads'.

To destroy Iraq as an independent nation, the U.S. initiated the criminal campaign of "De-Ba'athification", which implied the liquidation of anyone associated with the Ba'ath Party as well as anyone with anti-Occupation nationalist views. "De-Ba'athification" is simply a murderous campaign for inciting violence and destroying the Iraqi society. Together with the Israeli Mossad, U.S. Special Forces, the pro-Occupation militias and death squads have embarked on deliberate campaign of assassinations and ethnic cleansing. Thousands of scientists, including more than 350 scientists specialized in nuclear science have been assassinated. Thousands of professors, prominent politicians, and medical doctors have been murdered in cold blood. The Ministry of Higher Education reported that at least 210 teachers have been murdered and some 3,700 have fled Iraq to neighbouring countries. According to the UN more than 3,000 Iraqis flee to Syria and Jordan every day to avoid being killed. More than 1.7 million Iraqis have fled the country.

The aim is to create a climate of terror and incite civil war among Iraqis in order to justify the ongoing Occupation of Iraq and the fraudulent "war on terror". The growing number of daily civilian massacres, rapes and torture of Iraqis by U.S. forces and their collaborators are deliberately ignored by the media, making Iraq the biggest hidden U.S. atrocity in the U.S. history of violence against defenceless people. It is also possible that the violence is

created to provide a “safety net” for foreign troops' withdrawal and discredit the heroic struggle and Resistance against the Occupation and deny Iraqis victory against the most violent and powerful war machine in history....

The U.S. policy of “let them kill each other” is an integral part of U.S. foreign policy carefully executed to serve U.S. imperialist interests. Hence, the comment of Senator Carl Levin, “We cannot save the Iraqis from themselves”, designed to deflect any U.S. responsibility away from war crimes and misleadingly presenting the Occupation as the saviour of Iraqis. We know that the vast majority of Iraqis disagree and want the immediate end of the Occupation. More than 61 per cent of Iraqis approve of the Resistance attacks against the occupying forces. The U.S. and its allies bear full responsibility for the destruction of Iraq and for the death of more than 700,000 innocent Iraqi civilians.

Iraqis have gone many generations without fighting each other. Iraqi (males and females) worked studies and conducted their business in a safe environment. Regardless of their religious affiliations and ethnic backgrounds, the Iraqi people were living in peaceful environment despite the horror of the West-imposed genocidal sanctions. Why have they suddenly started fighting? Why all these crimes and bloodshed did not take place under the government of Saddam Hussein, even when his government was scrutinised by Western NGOs and human rights organisations? Today, these NGOs and human rights organisations have remained silent, preferring to use the fraudulent and farcical trial of Saddam to claim credibility of “defending” human rights. In less than four years, the U.S. and U.S.-trained and armed death squads and militias have destroyed Iraq beyond comprehension.

The immediate arrest of senior police commandos after the raid on the Higher Education Ministry annexes and the immediate release of some hostages shed light on the extent of U.S. complicity in the ongoing crimes against the Iraqi people. Therefore, the longer the U.S. forces stayed in Iraq, the more violence they generate. Only full and immediate withdrawal of U.S. forces and mercenaries will contribute to the end of violence and ongoing suffering of the Iraqi people.

http://www.globalresearch.ca/index.php?context=viewArticle&code=HAS20061207&articleId=4071

US-Trained, Supervised Police Slaughtering Iraqi Civilians

by francislholland

Thu Oct 05, 2006 at 07:42:23 AM PST

US Forces Deny Involvement

The 8th brigade of the Iraqi National Police, trained and organized by the United States to cordon off and "clear" Sunni areas of Baghdad, has been decommissioned by the Iraqi Interior Ministry after witnesses complained that the US-trained and supervised police officers were systematically kidnapping, torturing and killing Iraqi civilians,

particularly Sunnis.



- francislholland's diary :: ::

Iraqi authorities said Wednesday that they have suspended an entire brigade of as many as 1,200 police officers for suspected connections to kidnappings and executions.

The Interior Ministry said it would recall and retrain the national police's 8th Brigade, based in the capital, after witnesses reported that men wearing police uniforms were behind the kidnapping Sunday of 26 workers at a south Baghdad meat processing plant.
Six of the workers later were found dead. One who had been shot and left for dead apparently crawled away to a military checkpoint, authorities said.

The decommissioning comes after street protests erupted at one of the police unit's checkpoints in the capital, and U.S. military officials requested that one of the three battalions in the brigade be recalled [http://www.latimes.com/...]

In the incident Sunday at the frozen-meat processing plant in the south Baghdad neighborhood of Amil, about half a dozen men claiming to be police officers entered and began asking employees for identification cards before ordering most of them into a truck and driving away.

At another location, the employees were beaten and then separated into Sunnis and Shiites, with the Shiites permitted to leave, according to a survivor who was interviewed by investigators from the 172nd Stryker Brigade Combat Team.

A military source said the kidnappers asked one man, "Why are you working with these Sunnis?" before releasing him.

All of the shooting victims were Sunnis.

Cartridge casings found at the scene of the kidnapping match those used in handguns carried by Iraqi police, but differ from those most commonly used on the street, military investigators said. [http://www.latimes.com/...]

The US Defense Department confirms that it trained and is now actively coordinating the 8th Brigade forces in Baghdad, the forces that civilians say are rounding up, torturing and executing civilians.

Iraqi National Police (INP) from the 8th Brigade, 2nd National Police Division, working with Multi-National Division - Baghdad (MND-B) soldiers, searched more than 980 buildings in southern Baghdad's Risalah

neighborhood Sept. 9.

During the first day of the clearing operation, Iraqi Security Forces and MND-B Soldiers from 2nd Battalion, 6th Infantry Regiment, 1st Armored Division, attached to 4th Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, detained eight suspected terrorists and confiscated more than 30 weapons.[http://www.defendamerica.mil/...]

According to the US Defense Department, the ongoing "clearing" operation, "Operation Together Forward", is "a joint effort between INP and its Coalition Forces partners from MND-B" that involves "approximately 15,000 Coalition Forces". [http://www.defendamerica.mil/...]

To address the documented murders of civilians by US-supervised police, "U.S. military officials said members of the 8th Brigade would be retrained by Iraqis under U.S. guidance, and some officers might lose their jobs or face prosecution." Meanwhile, "Iraqi Ministry of Health statistics released Wednesday show that 2,667 civilians died violently in September, and 2,994 were injured. A substantial number of them fell victim to death squads, which often pull passersby off sidewalks, seize people from their homes, or drag motorists out of their cars. Their bodies often are found bearing gunshot wounds and signs of torture." [http://www.latimes.com/...]

Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld has held El Salvador up as a model for Iraq. And during the recent Vice Presidential debates, Vice President Dick Cheney stated, "Twenty years ago we had a similar situation in El Salvador. We had a guerilla insurgency that controlled roughly a third of the country, 75,000 people dead. And we held free elections ... And today El Salvador is a whale of a lot better because we held free elections." According to a 1993 U.N.-sponsored truth commission, however, up to "90 percent of the atrocities in the conflict "were committed by the U.S.-sponsored army and its surrogates, "with the rebels responsible for 5 percent and the remaining 5 percent undetermined." These death squads "abducted members of the civilian population and of rebel groups.

They tortured their hostages, were responsible for their disappearance and usually executed them." [http://www.alternet.org/waroniraq/20941/]
36,000 Iraqis will die in the next 12 months if this rate of killing remains constant.

http://www.dailykos.com/story/2006/10/5/104223/348

World Socialist Web Site www.wsws.org

Torture and civilian deaths reach record levels in Iraq

By Peter Symonds
23 September 2006

Introduction to the "Salvador option" and Iraq's "Death squads" - *PART 2* -

The latest UN findings on Iraq provide a devastating picture of torture, escalating civilian deaths and lawlessness that represents a damning indictment of US-led occupation. Three years after the illegal invasion, the violent activities of the US military and its allies in suppressing any opposition have been supplemented by a spiralling sectarian civil war.

According to a United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI) report released on Wednesday, the civilian death toll throughout the country reached a record of 6,599 for July and August, or more than 100 a day, up from 5,818 for previous two months. The UNAMI figures plot a rise from 710 in January to 1,129 in April and 3,149 in June followed by 3,590 in July and 3,009 in August.

The actual toll is likely to be far higher. UNAMI estimates are based on two sources: the Ministry of Health, which records deaths reported by hospitals, and the Medico-Legal Institute in Baghdad, which tallies the unidentified bodies it receives. During July, the health ministry reported no deaths in Anbar province—the region of fiercest resistance to the US military.

UNAMI stated it continued to receive reports of US-led forces participating “in incidents of excessive use of force and restrictions imposed on the movement of civilians”. Deaths are also being caused by anti-US resistance groups as well as criminal gangs. However, the huge toll is increasingly due to sectarian violence.

“These killings reflect the fact that indiscriminate killings of civilians have continued throughout the country, while hundreds of bodies appear bearing signs of severe torture and execution-style killing. Such murders are carried out by death squads or by armed groups, with sectarian or revenge connotations,” the report stated.

UNAMI also pointed to rising numbers of “honour killings” of women, with an increase of women and girls shot through the chest, rather than the head. According to local informants, extremist Sunnis and Shiites have created secretive sharia committees, responsible for the brutal enforcement of their regressive moral codes for women.

Most of the killings—5,106 for July and August—took place in Baghdad, which has been turned into a battleground between sectarian militia. Violent attacks and reprisals involving the often-arbitrary killing of civilians are a daily occurrence. A city of more than five million people, or about 20 percent of the total population, that once prided itself on its cosmopolitanism is being carved into ethnically cleansed suburbs.

The UNAMI report estimated that 300,000 people have been displaced from their homes since February when the bombing of the Al-Askariya mosque in the city of Samarra triggered a sharp rise in communal violence. UN secretary general Kofi Annan warned on Monday of a “grave danger that the Iraqi state will break down, possibly in the midst of a full-scale civil war”.

The responsibility for this sectarian carnage rests with the Bush administration, which has relied on Shiite fundamentalist and Kurdish nationalist parties to impose its rule in Iraq. Many of the gangs of killers that operate inside the police force, including the Interior Ministry's notorious Wolf Brigade, were established by American operatives in 2004 and modelled on US-backed right-wing death squads in Latin America. A growing stream of US commentators have this year openly advocated the partition of Iraq on communal and sectarian lines as the means for bring the country and its oil firmly under US control.

It is no surprise that shadowy government forces and various militia groups operate networks of secret torture chambers throughout Baghdad. Washington's handpicked prime minister Awad Allawi set the example in 2004 when, according to eyewitness accounts to the *Sydney Morning Herald*, he personally shot dead at least six handcuffed prisoners in Baghdad's Al-Amariyah security centre in front of police and US military personnel. As one of the eyewitnesses declared: "Allawi wanted to send a message to his policemen and soldiers not to be scared if they kill anyone."

Torture and brutal executions are now an everyday occurrence. The UNAMI report stated: "Bodies found at the Medico-Legal Institute often bear signs of severe torture, including acid-induced injuries and burns caused by chemical substances, missing skin, broken bones (back, hands and legs), missing eyes, missing teeth and wounds caused by power drills and nails."

Speaking in Geneva on Thursday, Manfred Nowak, the UN's special rapporteur on torture and cruelty, declared that torture was "totally out of hand" in Iraq. "The situation is so bad many people say it is worse than it had been in the times of Saddam Hussein," he said. "You have terrorist groups, you have the military, you have police, you have these militias. There are so many people who are abducted, seriously tortured and finally killed."

Nowak conducted extensive interviews with Iraqi refugees in neighbouring Jordan. He said he received allegations of torture in prisons run by Iraq's interior and defence ministries as well as jails under the control of the US and its allies. "Many of these allegations, I have no doubt that they are credible," he said. Nowak called for the full publication of the results of a government inquiry into human rights violations at Al-Jadiriya detention centre in November 2005.

Speaking to the London *Times*, a US State Department official vehemently rejected Nowak's statements, saying: "How anyone could compare state-sanctioned torture under a dictator to the situation today is beyond us." Torture, however, is exactly what the Bush administration has sanctioned not only in Baghdad, but Guantánamo Bay and a network of CIA-run prisons around the world. Nowak diplomatically declared that the situation appeared to have improved since the exposure of US abuse of prisoners in Abu Ghraib. But there is no independent confirmation of the current conditions inside US military prisons in Iraq.

The UNAMI report said 35,000 Iraqis were being held in detention at the end of August, a 28 percent increase from the end of June. Of those, 13,571 were being held by US and other foreign forces, which continue to conduct arbitrary, widespread searches and detentions. All the prisoners in US custody are being held indefinitely without charge, in flagrant violation of their basic democratic rights. As of September 9, only 1,445 had been put on trial in Iraqi courts, and 1,252 convicted.

Ex-detainee Mouayad Yasin Hassan told Associated Press last weekend that he was detained "for security reasons" in April 2004 and held for 13 months at Abu Ghraib and Bucca where he was interrogated incessantly. He was refused a lawyer or any contact with his family. Another former prisoner Waleed Abdul Karim, who was incensed about his treatment in a US military jail, declared: "I will hate Americans for the rest of my life."

In a report to the UN Security Council on September 1, secretary general Annan tentatively expressed “concern” that arbitrary detention and torture continued to be widespread. “On June 1 2006, a joint inspection of a prison site by representatives of the Iraqi Government and the Multinational Force found 1,431 detainees with signs of physical and psychological abuse. A total of 52 arrest warrants have been issued against officials of the Ministry of the Interior but they have yet to be served,” he stated.

Torture and execution-style killings are continuing unabated. Over the past week, nearly 200 bodies have been found in the capital. US military spokesman Major General William Caldwell declared on Wednesday that there had been “a spike”, saying: “Many bodies found had clear signs of being bound, tortured and executed. We believe death squads and other illegal armed groups are responsible for this type of violence.” Given the origins of the death squads, however, the involvement of US forces certainly cannot be ruled out.
http://www.wsws.org/articles/2006/sep2006/iraq-s23_prn.shtml

CIA-Sponsored Death Squads Rampant in Iraq

by francislholland

Wed Sep 20, 2006 at 07:40:01 AM PST

How could we have been so blind, decrying the scores of daily deaths of Iraqis without ever demanding the end of the **CIA-sponsored death squads** there? Many of us have been comparing the war in Iraq to Vietnam without focusing on the more obvious parallels to the modus operandi and US personnel that Iraq shares with the previous US-sponsored conflicts in the El Salvador and Guatemala of the 1980's. The difference is crucially important, because it is the key to the source of the rampant "unexplained" and "unattributed" deaths of Iraqis that we read of in the papers each day. To determine who is doing all the death-squad killing in Iraq, lets just add up what President has told us, factor in the post-Central America anti-insurgency team he has appointed, and then draw the dreadfully obvious and necessary conclusions.

- francislholland's diary :: ::

For five years, the President has told us that:

(1) "I do think Iraq is a central front in the war on terror", [http://www.cbsnews.com/...] and he has said,

(2) "To win the war on terror, we must be able to detain, **question** and, when appropriate, prosecute terrorists captured here in America and on the battlefields around the world." [http://www.cnn.com/...], and Bush further insists incessantly that he

(3) Must use "all the tools" of anti-insurgency in Iraq. [http://www.whitehouse.gov/...]

Meanwhile, each day even the MSM reports one or more Iraq stories to the effect that,

Authorities in the capital discovered the bodies of six men who were blindfolded, handcuffed and shot in the back of the head, police said. [http://www.americanchronicle.com/...]

[G]unmen, militias, and paramilitary armies have attacked buses and minivans, killing all aboard, and they have carried out mass kidnappings of scores of Iraqis at a time.[http://www.military.com/...]

Since early 2005, gruesome finds of groups of corpses, often showing signs of execution or torture, have been becoming increasingly common. [http://news.bbc.co.uk/...]

Although Bush hasn't specifically stated (to my knowledge) that death squads are among "all of the tools" he is using *per se*, Alternet.com points out that the modus operandi of the death squads operating in the US's Iraq conflict is identical to the modus operandi of the US Government's counter-insurgency techniques in the Central America in the 1980's.

Amnesty International characterized the Salvadoran death squads as "official personnel acting in civilian clothes under the direction of superior officers." A 1989 Amnesty report, El Salvador "Death Squads"-A Government Strategy, identified a "persistent pattern of gross human rights violations by the Salvadoran armed forces" including "arbitrary arrest, torture, disappearance and extrajudicial execution."

Although human rights groups have continually linked death squad activities to the Salvadoran government, most U.S. media have reported on death squads as if they were a mysterious, independent force. This convenient fiction allows the U.S. government to continue providing massive military aid to the Salvadoran government as it commits horrendous cruelties-all in the name of promoting "democracy." [http://www.thirdworldtraveler.com/...]

To deal with the skyrocketing insurgency, the Pentagon is considering creating secret death squads in Iraq. Now, the Pentagon's brave new solution for democracy in the Middle East is to revisit the reprehensible "Salvador Option," the clandestine operation implemented by the Reagan White House in the 1980s in El Salvador. According to Newsweek, "Back then, faced with losing a war against the Salvadoran rebels, the United States government funded "nationalist" forces that allegedly included so-called death squads which killed scores of innocent civilians." Today, according to an explosive new article in Newsweek, the Pentagon dusted off that model and has a proposal on the table to "advise, support and possibly train" secret Iraqi squads, "most likely hand-picked Kurdish Peshmerga fighters and Shiite militiamen, to target Sunni insurgents and their sympathizers, even across the border into Syria."
It's unclear whether the current proposed policy would direct the Iraqi squads to assassinate their targets or "snatch" them and send them to secret facilities for interrogation. In plain language: the squads would be either hit men or kidnapper/torturers. [http://www.alternet.org/...]

Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld has held El Salvador up as a model for Iraq. And during the recent Vice Presidential debates, Vice President Dick Cheney stated, "Twenty years ago we had a similar situation in El Salvador. We had a guerilla insurgency that controlled roughly a third of the country, 75,000 people dead. And we held free elections ... And today El Salvador is a whale of a lot better because we held free elections." According to a 1993 U.N.-sponsored truth commission, however, up to "90 percent of the atrocities in the conflict "were committed by the U.S.-sponsored army and its surrogates, "with the rebels responsible for 5 percent and the remaining 5 percent undetermined." These death squads "abducted members of the civilian population and of rebel groups. They tortured their hostages, were responsible for their disappearance and usually executed them." [http://www.alternet.org/...]

President Bush also appointed neocon Elliot Abrams to be his senior adviser on the Middle East. Abrams was also a staunch supporter of the Salvador Option in the 1980s: when newspapers "reported that a U.S.-trained military

unit had massacred hundreds of villagers in the tiny Salvadoran hamlet of El Mozote, Abrams told Congress the story was nothing but communist propaganda." When confronted with the United Nations report that the vast majority of "atrocities in El Salvador's civil war were committed by Reagan-assisted death squads," Abrams's response: "The administration's record on El Salvador is one of fabulous achievements." Abrams was convicted of lying to Congress about Iran-Contra in 1987 - he was pardoned by George H.W. Bush in 1992. [http://www.alternet.org/...]

The US has even hired as contractors thousands of the very same people previously responsible for US-sponsored extra-judicial killings and death squad activity in Latin America. [http://www.alternet.org/...]
Blackwater USA [US contractor in Iraq] has sent recruiters to Chile, Peru, Argentina, Colombia and Guatemala for one specific reason alone," said an intelligence officer in Kuwait who requested anonymity. "All these countries experienced dirty warsâ€š and they have military men well-trained in dealing with internal subversives. They are well-versed in extracting confessions from prisoners. [http://www.alternet.org/...]

So, if Bush says that it is necessary to torture people in the Iraqi "central front" of the terror war, and then he moves the US death-squad personnel to Iraq, and then thousands of tortured Iraqis are found dead in the streets, just like in San Salvador [http://www.pbs.org/...] and Guatemala City, [http://www.gwu.edu/...] we have to draw the obvious conclusion that CIA-sponsored death squads are rampant in the rampant daily killings occurring in Iraq.
To my incomplete knowledge, the Administration has yet to admit that death squads are US policy in Iraq, but US policy in Central America was to deny the US of death squads as well.
With continuing reports of atrocities and murders in El Salvador, the U.S. Congress no longer accepted the State Department's assurance that things were getting better. Speaker of the House Tom Foley created a special task force to monitor El Salvador's investigation of the murders. Congressman Joe Moakley of Massachusetts was selected to head up the investigation. During his research and visits to El Salvador, Congressman Moakley encountered a massive cover-up, deep problems with the Salvadoran armed forces, conspiracy and lies, which led him to challenge U.S. policy. [http://www.pbs.org/...]

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Above, I quoted Bush saying that he would "question [torture] and, when appropriate, prosecute terrorists." But what does Bush do with those whom he deems to be suspected or potential terrorists when he does NOT deem it "appropriate" to formally prosecute them? Does he simply let them go or do they end up dead by the score on the streets of Iraq, "blindfolded, handcuffed and shot in the back of the head" [http://www.americanchronicle.com/...] "showing signs of execution or torture"? [http://news.bbc.co.uk/...]

History and the President's own words and deeds speak for themselves. [http://www.alternet.org/...] The US is certainly sponsoring or directly organizing the death squads that are killing thousands or Iraqi, many more than are being killed in direct confrontations with US troops.

I don't think the majority of the US public favors anonymous US-sponsored death squads that kill dozens of people a day. It's time for the public and Democratic members of Congress to conduct investigations and render a full accounting of US-sponsored death-squad activity in Iraq, just as Congressman Joe Moakley of Massachusetts led such investigations in the 1980's, as part of the effort to stop it. [http://www.serendipity.li/...]. [http://www.amnestyusa.org/...] "Our" Government, which operates in our name, should not be rounding up dozens of Iraqis each day and shooting them in the back of the head.
http://www.dailykos.com/story/2006/9/20/10401/8655

San Francisco Indymedia

Original article is at http://sf.indymedia.org/news/2006/06/1729966.php Print comments.

You can't teach old collaborators human rights
by Duncan McFarlane (repost) *Monday, Jun. 19, 2006 at 12:54 AM*

By Duncan McFarlane

Some of the same British military intelligence units and officers involved in collusion with terrorist death squads in the killing of civil rights lawyer Patrick Finucane and other innocent people in Northern Ireland were also involved in the killing of Jean Charles De Menezes. The same people are also involved in 'counter-terrorism' in Iraq.

"Patrick Finucane was a prominent criminal defence and civil rights lawyer; his was one of the leading law firms in the 1980s in Northern Ireland acting in defence of those detained or charged under emergency legislation. He was instrumental in raising fair trial issues in the courts, arguing against practices which were in violation of international human rights standards. He was shot dead by two masked men on 12 February 1989 in front of his wife and his three children at their home in Belfast, Northern Ireland."

Amnesty International 'Patrick Finucane's killing: Official collusion and cover-up'(1)
The murder of civil rights lawyer Pat Finucane in 1989 was the result of collusion between the Ulster Defence Association – a loyalist terrorist organisation – and a British military intelligence unit – the Forces Research Unit or FRU which was headed by one Gordon Kerr from 1987 to 1991. The FRU included the intelligence 'handler' of UDA man Brian Nelson who was involved in the Finucane murder. The FRU were also involved in the murder by the UDA of at least 14 other people – mostly innocent of any connection to the IRA. Some like Finucane acted as defence lawyers for people suspected by the FRU of being in the IRA – and on that basis the FRU passed their lawyers' names to the UDA death squads. Several people have also testified that they were employed as FRU double agents in the IRA during the 1980s and in the Real IRA cell which carried out the Omagh bombing which

killed 29 people in 1998 (After 1991 the FRU was renamed the 'Joint Services Group'). They claim the FRU allowed bombings to go ahead rather than risk blowing their agents' cover – bringing in to question what the FRU's real motives were if they weren't to prevent terrorist attacks (1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8,9).

You might think that there would have been charges brought against FRU members when this was revealed. Instead the FRU are now re-deployed in Britain and Iraq for under the new name of the Joint Services Group (JSG) (10). Kerr was promoted to Brigadier and given a posting at the British embassy in Beijing where he would have diplomatic immunity from prosecution (11). Geoff Hoon as Defence Minister in 2000 got a court injunction banning a Northern Irish newspaper from reporting on a court case charging British military intelligence with collusion in the murder of a 66 year old Catholic man - Francisco Notorantonio – in Belfast in 1987 (12).

After the Iraq war 'ended' in May 2003 Kerr was sent to direct intelligence operations in Iraq. By May 2005 another of the British military intelligence units involved in the 'dirty war' in Northern Ireland – the 14th Intelligence Detachment – nicknamed the '14th' or 'the Det'- was renamed the Special Reconnaissance Regiment (SRR) responsible for 'counter-terrorism' operations in Iraq and the UK. Brigadier Gordon Kerr was appointed the head of the SRR. (13,14,15). All retain immunity from prosecution – this time that held by all coalition troops in Iraq at the demand of the Bush administration as occupying power (16).

True to old form in Northern Ireland we now know that the SRR have already been involved in getting at least one more innocent person killed. On the day that the Brazilian Jean Charles De Menezes was killed by armed police in the London underground at least one member of the Special Reconnaissance Regiment was the man who wrongly identified him as possibly being one of the July the 7th bombers. The government and the Metropolitan Police have refused to answer questions about whether more than one member of the SRR was involved in the surveillance team following Menezes (17,18,19).

The Scotsman newspaper also reported that the two SAS men arrested by Iraqi police last August for allegedly driving around with automatic weapons and bomb making equipment were also under the command of the SRR – which would also put them under the command of Brigadier Gordon Kerr as head of that unit (20). Iraqi journalists hired by companies like CBS are frequently shot, jailed without charge and accused or 'aiding insurgents by their actions' or disappeared by US forces if they film the aftermath of terrorist bombings according to reports by the New York Times and Wall Street Journal (21,22)

The advanced bombs or 'improvised explosive devices' (IEDs) being used against British forces in Iraq are also apparently a legacy of the FRU's time in Northern Ireland. Using the logic that if they knew how the IRA made its bombs they could defuse them more easily the FRU was involved in using double agents to give the IRA the technology to make advanced bombs triggered by beams of light. The IRA used these against RUC police officers. It has been speculated that they then sold or shared the technology with the PLO and Hezbollah who traded it on to Iraqi insurgents – but how the technology was transferred to Iraq and by who remains uncertain (23).

Just as human rights lawyers were seen as 'IRA' by the FRU and their UDA terrorist allies and often assassinated in Northern Ireland so Iraqi academics who speak out against the occupation are routinely assassinated (24). There is no specific evidence that the Special Reconnaissance Regiment or the Joint research Group are involved in organising these assassinations but we do know that the tactic of collusion with terrorist death squad killings in

Northern Ireland and there is no reason to think their tactics will have changed much given that many of their personnel – like Kerr – are unchanged.

There are death and torture squads linked to many different militias, to the coalition backed Iraqi government , and – according to Iraqi exile Sami Ramadani – to former Iraqi Prime Minister and ex-CIA funded terrorist Iyad Allawi (25,26,27).

US units are similarly involved in co-operating with extremely dubious groups in Iraq – including some of Saddam's torturers in the new Pentagon funded secret police , the Iraqi police and the fanatical Shia 'Wolf Brigade'. The 'Wolf Brigade' consider all Sunnis to be apostates rather than Muslims and have the same kind of relationship with US forces that paramilitaries like the Serbian extremists of Arkan's Tigers had with the Yugoslav military in the Bosnian War – i.e. US forces can deny responsibility for killings and torture carried out by Iraqi government paramilitaries they trained (28,29,30,31,32,33).

All of this is a long way from a war 'against terrorism' or for 'human rights' and 'democracy'. You can't teach human rights to torturers like the Mukhabarat, fanatics like the Wolf Brigade or old collaborators with terrorists like the SRR and JSG who were the FRU and 'Det' of the dirty war in Northern Ireland. To employ these people is to continue human rights abuses against guilty and innocent alike. Iraqis are not safer with them operating in Iraq with the immunity from prosecution held by all coalition forces there - and the killing of Jean Charles De Menezes showed that people in Britain aren't safe from them either.

It's time that people with a record of collaborating in terrorist murders were out of the military and in front of the courts so that we can eliminate the additional dangers of their 'counter-terrorism' operations and replace them with people who can be trusted.In Northern Ireland they were neither right nor effective – their collusion in UDA terrorist murders helped create a surge in recruitment and support for IRA terrorists in the 80s. The De Menezes case showed that they are just as much of a liability now.

Countless My Lai Massacres in Iraq

By Dahr Jamail

05/30/06 "**t r u t h o u t**" -- The media feeding frenzy around what has been referred to as "Iraq's My Lai" has become frenetic. Focus on US Marines slaughtering at least 20 civilians in Haditha last November is reminiscent of the media spasm around the "scandal" of Abu Ghraib during April and May 2004.

Yet just like Abu Ghraib, while the media spotlight shines squarely on the Haditha massacre, countless atrocities continue daily, conveniently out of the awareness of the general public. Torture did not stop simply because the media finally decided, albeit in horribly belated fashion, to cover the story, and the daily slaughter of Iraqi civilians by US forces and US-backed Iraqi "security" forces had not stopped either.

Earlier this month, I received a news release from Iraq, which read, "On Saturday, May 13th, 2006, at 10:00 p.m., US Forces accompanied by the Iraqi National Guard attacked the houses of Iraqi people in the Al-Latifya district

south of Baghdad by an intensive helicopter shelling. This led the families to flee to the Al-Mazar and water canals to protect themselves from the fierce shelling. Then seven helicopters landed to pursue the families who fled ... and killed them. The number of victims amounted to more than 25 martyrs. US forces detained another six persons including two women named Israa Ahmed Hasan and Widad Ahmed Hasan, and a child named Huda Hitham Mohammed Hasan, whose father was killed during the shelling."

The report from the Iraqi NGO called The Monitoring Net of Human Rights in Iraq (MHRI) continued, "The forces didn't stop at this limit. They held an attack on May 15th, 2006, supported also by the Iraqi National Guards. They also attacked the families' houses, and arrested a number of them while others fled. US snipers then used the homes to target more Iraqis. The reason for this crime was due to the downing of a helicopter in an area close to where the forces held their attack."

The US military preferred to report the incident as an offensive where they killed 41 "insurgents," a line effectively parroted by much of the media.

On that same day, MHRI also reported that in the Yarmouk district of Baghdad, US forces raided the home of Essam Fitian al-Rawi. Al-Rawi was killed along with his son Ahmed; then the soldiers reportedly removed the two bodies along with Al-Rawi's nephew, who was detained.

Similarly, in the city of Samara on May 5, MHRI reported, "American soldiers entered the house of Mr. Zidan Khalif Al-Heed after an attack upon American soldiers was launched nearby the house. American soldiers entered this home and killed the family, including the father, mother and daughter who is in the 6th grade, along with their son, who was suffering from mental and physical disabilities."

This same group, MHRI, also estimated that between 4,000 and 6,000 Iraqi civilians were killed during the November 2004 US assault on Fallujah. Numbers which make those from the Haditha massacre pale in comparison.

Instead of reporting incidents such as these, mainstream outlets are referring to the Haditha slaughter as one of a few cases that "present the most serious challenge to US handling of the Iraq war since the Abu Ghraib prison scandal."

Marc Garlasco, of Human Rights Watch, told reporters recently, "What happened at Haditha appears to be outright murder. The Haditha massacre will go down as Iraq's My Lai."

Then there is the daily reality of sectarian and ethnic cleansing in Iraq, which is being carried out by US-backed Iraqi "security" forces. A recent example of this was provided by a representative of the Voice of Freedom Association for Human Rights, another Iraqi NGO which logs ongoing atrocities resulting from the US occupation.

"The representative ... visited Fursan Village (Bani Zaid) with the Iraqi Red Crescent Al-Madayin Branch. The village of 60 houses, inhabited by Sunni families, was attacked on February 27, 2006, by groups of men wearing black clothes and driving cars from the Ministry of Interior. Most of the villagers escaped, but eight were caught and immediately executed. One of them was the Imam of the village mosque, Abu Aisha, and another was a 10-

year-old boy, Adnan Madab. They were executed inside the room where they were hiding. Many animals (sheep, cows and dogs) were shot by the armed men also. The village mosque and most of the houses were destroyed and burnt."

The representative had obtained the information when four men who had fled the scene of the massacre returned to provide the details. The other survivors had all left to seek refuge in Baghdad. "The survivors who returned to give the details guided the representative and the Red Crescent personnel to where the bodies had been buried. They [the bodies] were of men, women and one of the village babies."

The director of MHRI, Muhamad T. Al-Deraji, said of this incident, "This situation is a simple part of a larger problem that is orchestrated by the government ... the delay in protecting more villagers from this will only increase the number of tragedies."

Arun Gupta, an investigative journalist and editor with the New York Indypendent newspaper of the New York Independent Media Center, has written extensively about US-backed militias and death squads in Iraq. He is also the former editor at the Guardian weekly in New York and writes frequently for Z Magazine and Left Turn.

"The fact is, while I think the militias have, to a degree, spiraled out of US control, it's the US who trains, arms, funds, and supplies all the police and military forces, and gives them critical logistical support," he told me this week. "For instance, there were reports at the beginning of the year that a US army unit caught a "death squad" operating inside the Iraqi Highway Patrol. There were the usual claims that the US has nothing to do with them. It's all a big lie. The American reporters are lazy. If they did just a little digging, there is loads of material out there showing how the US set up the highway patrol, established a special training academy just for them, equipped them, armed them, built all their bases, etc. It's all in government documents, so it's irrefutable. But then they tell the media we have nothing to do with them and they don't even fact check it. In any case, I think the story is significant only insofar as it shows how the US tries to cover up its involvement."

Once again, like Abu Ghraib, a few US soldiers are being investigated about what occurred in Haditha. The "few bad apples" scenario is being repeated in order to obscure the fact that Iraqis are being slaughtered every single day. The "shoot first ask questions later" policy, which has been in effect from nearly the beginning in Iraq, creates trigger-happy American soldiers and US-backed Iraqi death squads who have no respect for the lives of the Iraqi people. Yet, rather than high-ranking members of the Bush administration who give the orders, including Bush himself, being tried for the war crimes they are most certainly guilty of, we have the ceremonial "public hanging" of a few lowly soldiers for their crimes committed on the ground.

In an interview with CNN on May 29th concerning the Haditha massacre, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff General Peter Pace commented, "It's going to be a couple more weeks before those investigations are complete, and we should not prejudge the outcome. But we should, in fact, as leaders take on the responsibility to get out and talk to our troops and make sure that they understand that what 99.9 percent of them are doing, which is fighting with honor and courage, is exactly what we expect of them."

This is the same Peter Pace who when asked how things were going in Iraq by Tim Russert on Meet the Press this past March 5th said, "I'd say they're going well. I wouldn't put a great big smiley face on it, but I would say they're

going very, very well from everything you look at ..."

Things are not "going very, very well" in Iraq. There have been countless My Lai massacres, and we cannot blame 0.1% of the soldiers on the ground in Iraq for killing as many as a quarter of a million Iraqis, when it is the policies of the Bush administration that generated the failed occupation to begin with.

Dahr Jamail is an independent journalist who spent over 8 months reporting from occupied Iraq. He presented evidence of US war crimes in Iraq at the International Commission of Inquiry on Crimes Against Humanity Committed by the Bush Administration in New York City in January 2006. He writes regularly for TruthOut, Inter Press Service, Asia Times and TomDispatch, and maintains his own web site, dahrjamailiraq.com.
http://www.informationclearinghouse.info/article13427.htm

"Victory"? Forget it
Bush is trying to keep Americans from abandoning his disastrous war by claiming victory is at hand. But even his own generals know that's a lie.

By Sidney Blumenthal
05/25/06 "Salon" -- -- When new Iraqi Prime Minister Nouri Kamel al-Maliki unveiled his government last week, five months after his country's elections, and was unable to appoint ministers of defense and interior, President Bush hailed it as a "turning point." And that was just one month after Maliki's mentor, former Prime Minister Ibrahim al-Jafaari, to whom he had been loyal deputy, installed in the position through the support of radical Shiite cleric Muqtada al-Sadr, was forced to relinquish his office through U.S. pressure.

Bush has been proclaiming Iraq at a turning point for years. "Turning point" is a frequent and recurring talking point, often taken up by the full chorus of the president ("We've reached another great turning point," Nov. 6, 2003; "A turning point will come in less than two weeks," June 18, 2004), vice president ("I think about when we look back and get some historical perspective on this period, I'll believe that the period we were in through 2005 was, in fact, a turning point," Feb. 7, 2006), secretary of state and secretary of defense, and ringing down the echo chamber.

This latest "turning point" reveals an Iraqi state without a social contract, a government without a center, a prime minister without power and an American president without a strategy. Each sectarian group maintains its own militia. Each leader's influence rests on these armed bands, separate armies of tens of thousands of men. The militias have infiltrated and taken over key units of the Iraqi army and local police, using them as death squads, protection rackets and deterrent forces against enemies. Reliable statistics are impossible, but knowledgeable reporters estimate there are about 40 assassinations a day in Iraq. Ethnic cleansing is sweeping the country. From Kirkuk in the north to Baghdad in the middle to Basra in the south, Kurds are driving out Turkmen and Arabs, Shiites are killing Sunnis, and the insurgency enjoys near unanimous support among Sunnis. Contrary to Bush's blanket rhetoric about "terrorists" and constant reference to the insurgency as "the enemy," "foreign fighters are a small component of the insurgency," according to Anthony H. Cordesman of the Center for Strategic and International Studies.

Patrick Cockburn, one of the most accurate and intrepid journalists in Iraq, wrote last week in the Independent of London that "the overall security situation in Iraq is far worse than it was a year ago. Baghdad and central Iraq, where Shia, Sunni and Kurd are mixed, is in the grip of a civil war fought by assassins and death squads. As in Bosnia in 1992, each community is pulling back into enclaves where it is the overwhelming majority and able to defend itself."

While Prime Minister Maliki has declared his intention to enforce an unused militia-demobilization decree proclaimed by the now disbanded Coalition Provisional Authority in 2004, he has made no gesture beyond his statement, and no Iraqi leader has volunteered to be the first test case of demobilization. The New York Times Wednesday cited an American official on the absence of action on this front: '"They need to begin by setting examples,' an American official in Baghdad said of the Iraqi government. 'It is just very noticeable to me that they are not making any examples.' 'None,' the official said. 'Zero.'"

Maliki's inability to fill the posts of minister of defense and minister of the interior reflects the control of the means of violence by factions and sects unwilling to cede it to a central authority. Inside the new government, ministries are being operated as sectarian fiefdoms. The vacuum at the Defense and Interior ministries represents a state of civil war in which no one can be vested with power above all.

In his speech on Monday referring to another "turning point," President Bush twice spoke of "victory." "Victory" is the constant theme he has adopted since last summer, when he hired public opinion specialist Peter Feaver for the National Security Council. Feaver's research claims that the public will sustain military casualties so long as it is persuaded that they will lead to "victory." Bush clings to this P.R. formula to explain, at least to himself, the decline of his political fortunes. "Because we're at war, and war unsettles people," he said in an interview with NBC News last week. To make sense of the disconcerting war, he imposes his familiar framework of us vs. them, "the enemy" who gets "on your TV screen by killing innocent people" against himself.

In his Monday speech, Bush reverted yet again to citing Sept. 11, 2001, as the ultimate justification for the Iraq war. Defiant in the face of terrorists, he repeated whole paragraphs from his 2004 campaign stump speech. "That's just the lessons of September the 11th that I refuse to forget," he said. Stung by the dissent of the former commanders of the U.S. Army in Iraq who have demanded the firing of Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld, Bush reassured the audience that he listens to generals. "I make my mind up based not upon politics or political opinion polls, but based upon what the commanders on the ground tell me is going on," he said.

Yet currently serving U.S. military commanders have been explicitly telling him for more than two years, and making public their view, that there is no purely military solution in Iraq. For example, Gen. John Abizaid, the U.S. commander, said on April 12, 2004: "There is not a purely U.S. military solution to any of the particular problems that we're facing here in Iraq today."

Newsweek reported this week that the U.S. military, in fact, is no longer pursuing a strategy for "victory." "It is consolidating to several 'superbases' in hopes that its continued presence will prevent Iraq from succumbing to full-flown civil war and turning into a failed state. Pentagon strategists admit they have not figured out how to move to superbases, as a way of reducing the pressure -- and casualties -- inflicted on the U.S. Army, while at the same time remaining embedded with Iraqi police and military units. It is a circle no one has squared. But

consolidation plans are moving ahead as a default position, and U.S. Ambassador Zalmay Khalilzad has talked frankly about containing the spillover from Iraq's chaos in the region."

Yet Bush continues to declare as his goal (with encouragement from his polling expert on the NSC) the victory that the U.S. military has given up on. And he continues to wave the banner of a military solution against "the enemy," although this "enemy" consists of a Sunni insurgency whose leadership must eventually be conciliated and brought into a federal Iraqi government and of which the criminal Abu Musab al-Zarqawi faction and foreign fighters are a small part.

Bush's belief in a military solution, moreover, renders moot progress on a political solution, which is the only potentially practical approach. His war on the Sunnis simply agitates the process of civil war. The entire burden of progress falls on the U.S. ambassador, whose inherent situation as representative of the occupying power inside the country limits his ability to engage in the international diplomacy that might make his efforts to bring factions together possible. Khalilzad's tentative outreach to Iran, in any case, was shut down by Washington. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, for her part, finds herself in Bulgaria, instead of conducting shuttle diplomacy in Amman, Jordan; Riyadh, Saudi Arabia; Ankara, Turkey; and Tehran. The diplomatic vacuum intensifies the power vacuum in Iraq, exciting Bush's flights of magical thinking about victory: I speak, therefore it is.

Bush doesn't know that he can't achieve victory. He doesn't know that seeking victory worsens his prospects. He doesn't know that the U.S. military has abandoned victory in the field, though it has been reporting that to him for years. But the president has no rhetoric beyond "victory."
Bush's chance for a quick victory in Iraq evaporated when the neoconservative fantasy collapsed almost immediately after the invasion. But the "make-believe" of "liberation" that failed to provide basic security set in motion "fratricidal violence," as Nir Rosen writes in his new book, "In the Belly of the Green Bird: The Triumph of the Martyrs in Iraq," based on firsthand observation of the developing insurgency in the vacuum created by U.S. policy.

Indeed, Bush's nominee for director of the CIA, Gen. Michael Hayden, former director of the National Security Agency, in his confirmation hearings, acknowledged the neoconservative manipulation of intelligence to make the case for the Iraq war and disdained it. Asked by Sen. Carl Levin, D-Mich., about the administration's efforts to tie Saddam Hussein to al-Qaida, Hayden replied: "Sir, I -- as director of NSA, we did have a series of inquiries about this potential connection between al Qaeda and the Iraqi government. Yes, sir."

The exchange continued:
Levin: Now, prior to the war, the undersecretary of defense for policy, Mr. [Douglas] Feith, established an intelligence analysis cell within his policy office at the Defense Department. While the intelligence community was consistently dubious about links between Iraq and al Qaeda, Mr. Feith produced an alternative analysis, asserting that there was a strong connection. Were you comfortable with Mr. Feith's office's approach to intelligence analysis?
Hayden: No, sir, I wasn't. I wasn't aware of a lot of the activity going on, you know, when it was contemporaneous with running up to the war. No, sir, I wasn't comfortable.

Hayden then explained at length the difference between working from the facts and trying to cherry-pick data to support a hypothesis. He made clear that the administration had engaged in the latter. Levin asked: "Now, I believe that you actually placed a disclaimer on NSA reporting relative to any links between al Qaeda and Saddam Hussein. And it was apparently following the repeated inquiries from the Feith office. Would you just tell us what that disclaimer was?" Hayden answered: "Yes, sir. SIGINT neither confirms nor denies -- and let me stop at that point in the sentence so we can stay safely on the side of unclassified. SIGINT neither confirms nor denies, and then we finished the sentence based upon the question that was asked. And then we provided the data, sir." In the language of the agency, in other words, Hayden would not lend support to the Bush's administration's twisting of intelligence.

On May 15, Karl Rove, Bush's chief political advisor, gave a speech revealing one of his ideas about politics. "I think," he said, "there's also a great utility in looking at game changers. What are the things that will allow us to fundamentally change people's behavior in a different way?" Since Sept. 11, Rove has made plain that terrorism and war are the great game changers for Bush.

But while war may be the game changer for Bush's desire to put in place a one-party state, forge a permanent Republican majority, redefine the Constitution and the relationships of the branches of the federal government, and concentrate power in the executive, Bush has only the rhetoric of "victory." He has not stated what would happen the day after "victory." Although a victory parade would be his political nightmare, now the absence of victory is his nightmare. With every proclaimed "turning point," "victory" becomes ever more evanescent. He has no policy for victory and no politics beyond victory.
http://www.informationclearinghouse.info/article13182.htm

Sacred Terror
By Chris Floyd

12/08/05 "Moscow Times" -- -- The much-belated, poll-prompted outcry of a few U.S. elected officials against the widespread use of torture by the Bush administration -- following years of silent acquiescence in the face of incontrovertible evidence of deliberate atrocity -- is a welcome development, of course. But it has left an even more sinister aspect of Bushist policy untouched, one that likewise has been hidden in plain sight for years.

On Sept. 17, 2001, President George W. Bush signed an executive order authorizing the use of "lethal measures" against anyone in the world whom he or his minions designated an "enemy combatant." This order remains in force today. No judicial evidence, no hearing, no charges are required for these killings; no law, no border, no oversight restrains them. Bush has also given agents in the field carte blanche to designate "enemies" on their own initiative and kill them as they see fit.

The existence of this universal death squad -- and the total obliteration of human liberty it represents -- has not provoked so much as a crumb of controversy in the American establishment, although it's no secret. The executive order was first bruited in The Washington Post in October 2001. We first wrote of it here in November 2001. The New York Times added further details in December 2002. That same month, Bush officials made clear that the edict also applied to U.S. citizens, as The Associated Press reported.

The first officially confirmed use of this power was the killing of a U.S. citizen in Yemen by a CIA drone missile on Nov. 3, 2002. A similar strike occurred in Pakistan this month, when a CIA missile destroyed a house and purportedly killed Abu Hamza Rabia, a suspected al-Qaida figure. But the only bodies found at the site were those of two children, the houseowner's son and nephew, Reuters reports. The grieving father denied any connection to terrorism. An earlier CIA strike on another house missed Rabia but killed his wife and children, Pakistani officials reported.

But most of the assassinations are carried out in secret, quietly, professionally, like a contract killing for the mob. As a Pentagon document unearthed by The New Yorker in December 2002 put it, the death squads must be "small and agile" and "able to operate clandestinely, using a full range of official and non-official cover arrangements to ... enter countries surreptitiously."

The dangers of this policy are obvious, as a UN report on "extrajudicial killings" noted in December 2004: "Empowering governments to identify and kill 'known terrorists' places no verifiable obligation upon them to demonstrate in any way that those against whom lethal force is used are indeed terrorists. ... While it is portrayed as a limited 'exception' to international norms, it actually creates the potential for an endless expansion of the relevant category to include any enemies of the State, social misfits, political opponents, or others."

It's hard to believe that any genuine democracy would accept a claim by its leader that he could have anyone killed simply by labeling them an "enemy." It's hard to believe that any adult with even the slightest knowledge of history or human nature could countenance such unlimited power, knowing the evil it is bound to produce. Yet this is what the great and good in America have done. Like the boyars of old, they not only countenance but celebrate their enslavement to the ruler.

This was vividly demonstrated in one of the most revolting scenes in recent U.S. history: Bush's State of the Union address in January 2003, delivered to Congress and televised nationwide during the final frenzy of war-drum beating before the assault on Iraq. Trumpeting his successes in the war on terror, Bush claimed that "more than 3,000 suspected terrorists" had been arrested worldwide -- "and many others have met a different fate." His face then took on the characteristic leer, the strange, sickly half-smile it acquires whenever he speaks of killing people: "Let's put it this way: They are no longer a problem."

In other words, the suspects -- and even Bush acknowledged they were only suspects -- had been murdered. Lynched. Killed by agents operating unsupervised in that shadow world where intelligence, terrorism, politics, finance and organized crime meld together in one amorphous mass. Killed on the word of a dubious informer, perhaps: a tortured captive willing to say anything, a business rival, a personal foe, a bureaucrat looking to impress his superiors, a paid snitch in need of cash, a zealous crank pursuing ethnic, tribal or religious hatreds -- or any other purveyor of the garbage data that is coin of the realm in the shadow world.

Bush proudly held up this hideous system as an example of what he called "the meaning of American justice." And the assembled legislators applauded. Oh, how they applauded! They roared with glee at the leering little man's bloodthirsty, B-movie machismo. They shared his contempt for law -- our only shield, however imperfect, against the blind, ignorant, ape-like force of raw power. Not a single voice among them was raised in protest against this

tyrannical machtpolitik: not that night, not the next day, not ever.

Not even now, when the U.S. people's growing revulsion at Bush's bloody handiwork has emboldened a few long-time enablers of atrocity to criticize the "excesses" of his gulag and his "mishandling" of the war in Iraq. A few nips at the flank of the beast have been permitted. But the corroded heart of Bush's system of state terror -- officially sanctioned murder by presidential fiat -- remains curiously sacrosanct.

Annotations

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From El Salvador To Iraq: Why All Of This Repression?

By Steven Jonas

06/28/05 "ICH" - - According to an article by Peter Maas entitled "The Way of the Commandos" that appeared

in The New York Times Magazine on May 1, 2005, US authorities in Iraq have organized an Iraqi "counter-insurgency" force that looks and acts much like the "counter-insurgency" force that the Reaganites organized in El Salvador in the 1980s. Funnily enough, it is made up of Sunni Moslems who were among Saddam Hussein's crack troops, going after other Sunni Moslems who may or may not have been in the same commands. However, money does buy loyalty, especially when there are not too many jobs to be had by ex-Saddamite soldiers.

The tactics? According to Maas very similar to those used in El Salvador: summary execution, torture, indefinite imprisonment without specific charges and certainly without trial, holding family members responsible, destroying homes, and so on and so forth. On whose watch was this effort organized? Why on none other than that of the third American Pro-Counsel in Iraq, John Negroponte. He just happened to be the US Ambassador in El Salvador when the "dirty war" against the "leftists" (which led to an estimated 70,000 deaths, mainly civilian) was being carried out there.

There was the scathing report from Human Rights Watch on the Abu Ghraib-GuantanamoAfghanistan-"secret locations" U.S. international gulag (http://www.hrw.org/doc/?t=usa), followed by the equally scathing report from Amnesty International (http://www.amnestyusa.org/) that focused principally on Guantanamo Bay. The HRW report came out, to little notice in the US, just after most of the top chain-of-command officers connected with the Abu Ghraib horror had been exonerated by the Army. (The Amnesty report received much more attention, because, quite unusually for them, the White House with their attack dog Cheney leading the way, chose to respond to it.)

The one exception to the exoneration of the senior Abu Ghraib commanders was Brig. Gen. Janis Karpinski, the only female in the group, who got off sometime earlier with a relative slap on the wrist. Of course the top, top officials responsible for setting the overall policy, the current US Secretary of Defense and the Attorney General and the President who signed off on their directives, never even were investigated in this country. The Republican Congress is, after all, much too busy investigating the UN "oil-for-food scandal" and steroid use in Major League Baseball. (Talk about WMD, Weapons of Mass Distraction.) The Human Rights Witch report also appeared at the time a group of grunts directly involved with Abu Ghraib have confessed to or been convicted of participation in abuses. One wonders if some future Secretary or State will have on his/her resume participation in the cover-up, as did a recent occupant of the first in relation to the My Lai Massacre.

An outcry has occurred, even in major media sources in the US (see the Amnesty International website) over the Guantanamo Bay scandal of the denial of any rights at all to those prisoners held there (to say nothing of how they are being treated, starting with routine sensory deprivation (Newsday, June 15 2005, cover), many of whom seemed to have been rounded up randomly. In response, Sec. of Defense Himmler, I mean Rumsfeld, had this to say (News day, June 15, 2005, p. A5): "[The United States] does not want to be in the position of holding suspected terrorists any longer than is absolutely necessary. But as long as there remains a need to keep terrorists from striking again, a facility [Guantanamo] will continue to be needed." You think that I am going over the top in using the words Rumsfeld and Himmler in the same sentence? It is just the term that the Nazis used as they rounded up political opponents from the git-go of their regime.

And why will Guantanamo Bay in particular be needed? Listen to Deputy Attorney General J. Michael Wiggins, who works for "The Geneva-Conventions-are-Quaint-and-We-Can-Just-Ignore-Them-Even-Though-They-Are-

Part-of-the-Constitution" Attorney General Gonzalez: "It's our position that they [the prisoners at Guantanamo] can be held in perpetuity." He makes this statement because, dear readers, under the U.S. equivalent of the German Nazi Enabling Act, the Patriot Act, it is all perfectly legal in these United States at this time. They can be held in perpetuity because the President has designated them as "terrorists." Under the Patriot Act, which the President is so desperate to have made permanent, once that designation is made, persons held have no legal rights. That the Supreme Court said a year ago that they do is meaningless. The Georgites just ignore that ruling. But then again, doing such things is part of the Georgite definition of "freedom and democracy."

By the way, the whole library records thing and the Patriot Act is a smokescreen. The Georgites just gave Republicans in Congress something to hide behind, to "compromise on." The real stuff in the Act is the destruction of the Fourth, Fifth, and Sixth Amendments by the President, acting on his own authority.

Why, then, is all of this going on? Why is torture being developed to a fine art among US forces? Why is the US involved in organizing and supporting death squads once again? Does it have anything to do with fighting terrorism, a worthy fight indeed? Well, there does not seem to be any evidence of that. Other countries, like Spain, are reeling in terrorists without resorting to these kinds of tactics. As for death squads, they may have worked well, after the 70,000 deaths, primarily against civilians in El Salvador. However, in Iraq, against other former Saddamite thugs, when most of the non-Kurdish people of the country just want the U.S. to leave, could the Death Squad strategy be useful? Not likely.

My guess is that there is a long-range plan in operation here. I think that the neo-reactionaries/theocratic fascists know what they are doing. The bulk of the Georgite program for constant war abroad, destruction of all government at home except for the instruments of repression and support of corporate power, and religious oppression at home is being kept secret from the American people. They could hardly win elections on their real platform. However, as their program becomes more and more obvious, opposition and then resistance to it, even given the totally gutless DLC-dominated Democratic Party, is going to become more widespread.

Eventually they are going to have to employ some very violent, very vicious tactics at home to suppress it. What is going on here, against a group of poor Muslims, some of whom may have been terrorists (who could be dealt with, of course, by the conventional US civilian anti military justice systems which provide legal rights), but many of whom simply seemed to be in the wrong place at the wrong time? In my view, strategy development, technique perfection, target practice, facilities design experiments, and training for personnel, for what they will eventually turn on us here, on a much larger scale. There is simply no other explanation for what the Georgites are doing.

The Patriot Act has given them the legal tools to do this, as I have said more than once in this space. The attack on the independent judiciary, led by the likes of DeLay, Frist, and their close comrades-in-arms like James Dobson and Pat Robertson, becomes stronger every day. A recent Act of Congress has given the Secretary of Homeland Security, Michael Chertoff, unprecedented and totally unconstitutional powers to violate Federal statutes in a whole variety of areas from the awarding of contracts to voiding child labor and civil rights laws pertaining to his responsibilities, on his own volition. And so, prepare for Georgite violence.

To undertake that kind of violence you have to have the systems and personnel in place, ready and able to carry it out. Ergo, Abu Ghraib, Guantanamo, "detention in perpetuity" (without charges, without access to legal counselor

the courts), and the Iraqi Death Squads. In addition, who is running the "intelligence" side of the operation? None other than John Negroponte of El Salvador and Iraqi Death Squad fame, who now just happens to be the top dog for all US intelligence forces, domestic and foreign.

I must say that I think that the charge that the presently foreign U.S. international prison system for people held in this manner constitutes a "gulag" is totally unfair. "Concentration camps" would be a much more accurate description. In pre-war Nazi Germany the concentration camps were set up (starting on the night of January 30, 1933 just after Hitler had become Chancellor, even before the passage of the Enabling Act) precisely to imprison "terrorists" (as the Nazis called them in the beginning) in perpetuity, without legal rights. The Nazis used the concentration camp system, on German territory, to spread their terror and consolidate their power, long before they added the Death Camp (mainly outside of Germany) and Slate labor (both inside and outside of Germany) features to it.

It is so ironic. In the Time magazine article on the new Star Wars movie, it says, "Under Darth Sidious, the Sith Empire will shred and swallow up the fragile Republic .... Over the galaxy, the silence of repression will fall." Why is it that we are so good at talking about repression when it is in the past or in the movies, but not when it is staring us in the face?

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The British Bombers
Sploid.com

September 20, 2005

More details emerge on the most outrageous story from the Iraq occupation since Abu Ghraib.



The last remaining public justification for the U.S./U.K. occupation of Iraq is *terrorism*: The foreign forces cannot leave until Iraq is somewhat peaceful and the *terrorists* have been defeated.

That threadbare reasoning was ripped apart on Monday as the world -- other than the United States, where broadcast media avoided the story -- was shown two *agents provocateurs* employed by the British government. Their exact mission will never be proven. The evidence, however, is damning.

The two commandoes -- alternately identified as members of Britian's notorious SAS or a newer offshoot, the SRR -- were driving around a demonstration in Basra when their suspicious behavior attracted the attention of Basra police.



The Scotsman now reports that the men are members of the SRR, or Special Reconnaissance Regiment. The insignia shows a Greek helmet with a sword thrust through the mouth and up through the back of the skull.

The police attempted to stop the men, who were disguised as Arabs in local garb over their T-shirts and trousers. The men wore black-hair wigs and, according to some reports, typical headresses.
And they also carried a whole lot of weapons, including explosives and other bomb-making materials. They began firing at the police and passers-by.

At least one Basra policeman was shot dead. At least one person in the crowd was shot dead. An undetermined number of others were injured in the gunfight.

The British pair was jailed. Arab television showed the beaten men with bandages on their heads, and their huge collection of weaponry. Basra -- a relatively peaceful city compared to the rest of bloodsoaked Iraq -- had suddenly lost patience with the British occupiers, caught red-handed with all the tools necessary to launch "suicide bombs" against the people.

And then the British tanks rolled in ... and destroyed the jail, releasing 150 "terrorists" in the process. Whether the British commandoes were inside the jail is now disputed, as are most parts of the story, with Britian in damage-control mode and Iraq officials universally condeming the "barbaric" destruction of the jail and the suspected terrorist goals of the captured duo.

The city rioted against the tanks and troops, setting fire to at least one of the tanks.

U.K. media is now desperately backpedaling from the version of events reported by at least a dozen independent reporters working in Iraq, after reporting the same general events as other world media on Monday.

* * *

A spokesman for rebel Shia cleric Moqtada al-Sadr said the British commandoes were trying to pass themselves off as members of Sadr's rebel militia.



Sheikh Hassan told Socialist Worker that the two undercover soldiers seized by Iraqi police last Monday were armed with explosives and a remote control detonator. The soldiers were disguised as members of Sadr's militia, the Mehdi Army.

The trouble started when a senior Sadr official was arrested on Sunday. "We called a protest outside the mayor's office on Monday demanding the Sheikh be released," Sheikh Hassan said. "This protest was peaceful."

"But events in our city took a sinister turn when the police tried to stop two men dressed as members of the Mehdi Army driving near the protest. The men opened fire on the police and passers-by. After a car chase they were arrested."

"What our police found in their car was very disturbing — weapons, explosives and a remote control detonator," Sheikh Hassan said. "These are the weapons of terrorists. We believe these soldiers were planning an attack on a market or other civilian targets, and thanks be to God they were stopped and countless lives were saved."

There are about 8,500 British troops in and around Basra. Four Iraqis died in the riots against the jailbreak mission. Also, a local reporter who wrote for the New York Times and The Guardian was found murdered after being abducted by mysterious gunmen.

Following the lead of its American partners, the British Ministry of Defense denied all wrongdoing, called the destruction of the jail "absolutely right," and blamed everything on a "civil war" developing (or Iran, depending on the mouthpiece) in southern Iraq.

www.sploid.com/news/2005/09/the_british_bom.php

British bombs in Basra
Xymphora

September 21, 2005

I find myself increasingly becoming the old fogey of the conspiracy field. While the youngsters continue to come up with new and exciting conspiracies, *xymphora* slowly deteriorates into a lousy debunking blog. Witness the latest revelations from Basra. To summarize, two British soldiers, disguised as Arabs and with a car full of explosives, somehow find themselves in a contretemps with an Iraqi policeman, shoot him dead, are arrested by local authorities, refuse to explain what they were doing, end up in detention, and finally become the subject of negotiations between the British and Iraqis concerning their release, 'negotiations' apparently meaning to the British driving up to the prison with tanks and knocking the walls down (a fact which the British finally, but grudgingly, admitted), causing a riot which results in civilian deaths and the escape of other prisoners (and the soldiers weren't even in the prison!). Everybody has come to the obvious conclusion that this is the first

documented proof of the fact that much of the sectarian violence in Iraq is the work of coalition *agents provocateurs*, attempting to cause a civil war in Iraq. While I have no doubt that this intentional process is going on elsewhere in Iraq (and largely to fit the Israeli agenda, described here many times before, of breaking the country up into small, unthreatening statelets, with the additional motive of leading to the new Israeli ally, the Shi'ite Empire, to counter the largely Sunni opposition to Israeli imperial plans), I doubt that the Basra case is an example of it. There seems to be another conspiracy afoot.

The British have made a big deal of how much better they are than the Americans at shouldering the 'white man's burden' of policing their portion of Iraq. Of course, the Americans are so arrogant, culturally insensitive, and generally stupid, it is not difficult to do a better job. As well, the South is easier to police just because it is majority Shi'ite, and not interested in causing trouble for the central government. Nevertheless, it is true that the British have done a much better job than the Americans, and have some right to feel superior. And yet, *just recently*, everything has gone sideways. Here is the timeline:

1. In the early Spring, British officials anticipated that British troops would soon be withdrawing from Iraq.
2. In July, plans are leaked of a British plan to withdraw almost all British troops from Iraq (sending some of them to Afghanistan). This withdrawal would have started next month. Almost immediately, the deaths of British contractors is said to 'threaten' these plans.
3. In early August, journalist Steven Vincent, who worked for the *New York Times*, is found murdered outside of Basra. He had been shot and was found with his hands bound. Days before his death, he "had written an Op-Ed piece for The Times in which he criticized British security forces for failing to act against the Shiite militias' growing power in the local police force." It's unlikely, even given the ubiquity of the internet, that local militias would be on top of very recently published *New York Times* Op-Eds (although Vincent had written previously on the matter).
4. Normally quiescent Basra starts to become dangerous for British troops, and three are actually killed. While there has been a constant series of British deaths in Iraq, these most recent deaths seem to cause a new type of overreaction. On Sunday, September 18, the British arrest local leaders Sheik Ahmed Majid Farttusi and Sayyid Sajjad, arrests that almost certainly will lead to more trouble (Juan Cole has the timeline).
5. The British plans to withdraw are indefinitely cancelled, as conditions have worsened.
6. The two British soldiers are arrested near a protest arranged against the arrest of Sheik Ahmed Majid Farttusi, and rescued with a completely unnecessary, show of lethal violence.
7. Journalist Fakher Haider, who also worked for the *New York Times*, is found murdered on the same day as the British soldiers were arrested. He also had his hands bound and was shot. He had been taken away for 'questioning' by people claiming to be Iraqi police, a claim backed up by the fact they arrived in a *police car* (!). He "had recently reported on the growing friction and violence among Basra's rival Shiite militias, which are widely believed to have infiltrated the police." Now there are two murdered journalists in Basra, each of whom wrote about the growing power of Shi'ite militias in Basra (scuttlebutt that Steven Vincent's murder was related to his relationship with his Iraqi female translator seems to be disproved by the nature of the second murder). Local militia leaders would almost certainly have been unaware of the writings of these journalists (and you have to wonder why they would care if they did know). Somebody wants to remove Western journalists with good local contacts from Basra.

What I see here is an attempt to sabotage the British withdrawal, and the murders of both journalists may well be associated with this.

Creating sectarian violence doesn't really make sense in Basra, as the Zionist planners intend to keep the South whole, and part of the Shi'ite Empire. Causing trouble in Basra will only mess up those plans. On the other hand, setting a bomb off in Basra would have continued the campaign, started right after the announcement of withdrawal was made, to ensure that the British troops cannot be withdrawn from the South. Who benefits from non-withdrawal?:

1. the Americans, who would have been all alone in their battle against Islam once the British left;
2. elements in the British military, who so rarely get to be in a real war these days, are probably loathe having to go back to more endless marching drills in the rain (or, at best, in Afghanistan);
3. the international cadre of war financiers, who still derive considerable income from the British presence in Iraq; and
4. Tony Blair, who works for the financiers and has this extremely weird relationship with the United States (he seems to be under the misapprehension that he is Prime Minister of the United States).

I think there is a conspiracy here, but not necessarily the obvious one.
xymphora.blogspot.com/2005/09/british-bombs-in-basra.html

Fake Terrorism Is a Coalition's Best Friend

Matt Hutaff



September 20, 2005

Iraqi police recently caught two terrorists with a car full of explosives. Would it surprise you to learn they were British Special Forces?

The story sounds amazing, almost fantastical.

A car driving through the outskirts of a besieged city opens fire on a police checkpoint, killing one. In pursuit, the police surround and detain the drivers and find the vehicle packed with explosives – perhaps part of an insurgent's plan to destroy lives and cripple property. If that isn't enough, when the suspects are thrown in prison their allies drive right up to the walls of the jail, *break through them* and brave petroleum bombs and burning clothes to rescue their comrades. *150 other prisoners break free in the ensuing melee.*

Incredible, no? Yet this story took place in the southern Iraqi city of Basra recently. Violence continues to escalate in the breakout's aftermath... just not for the reasons you think.

You see, the drivers of the explosive-laden car were not members of an insurgency group – they were **British Special Forces**. Their rescuers? British soldiers driving British tanks.

That's right – two members of the British Armed forces *disguised as Arab civilians* killed a member of the Iraqi police while evading capture. When the people of Basra rightfully refused to turn the murderers over to the British government, per Coalition "mandate," they sent their own men in and released over 100 prisoners in the process.

Winning the hearts and minds, aren't we?

Sadly, this story is really not all that surprising. After hearing countless accounts of using napalm and torture against innocent civilians in addition to the other daily abuses dished out by American overseers, the thought of British scheming seems perfectly reasonable.

So what we have here is a clear instance of a foreign power attempting to fabricate a terrorist attack. Why else would the soldiers be dressed as Arabs if not to frame them? Why have a car laden with explosives if you don't plan to use them for destructive purposes? Iraq is headed towards civil war, and this operation was meant to accelerate the process by killing people and blaming others. Nothing more, nothing less. That the British army staged an over-the-top escape when it could rely on normal diplomatic channels to recover its people proves that.

Such extreme methods highlight the need to keep secrets.

There have been a number of insurgent bombings in Iraq recently. Who really is responsible for the bloodshed and destruction? The only tangible benefit of the bombings is justification for Coalition forces maintaining the peace in Iraq. Who benefits from that? Certainly not the Iraqis – they already believe most suicide bombings are done by the United States to prompt religious war. After reading about this incident, I'm not inclined to disagree.

Even though this false-flag operation was blown wide open, I'm afraid it might still be used in the mainstream media to incite further violence in the Middle East. Judging by the coverage that has emerged after the incident, my fears seem warranted.

Several articles have already turned the story against the angry Iraqis who fought the British tanks as they demolished the jail wall, painting them as aggressive Shia militia attacking the doe-eyed, innocent troops responding to the concern that their comrades were held by religious fanatics. A photograph of a troop on fire comes complete with commentary that the vehicles were under attack during a "bid to recover arrested servicemen" that were *possibly* undercover. All criminal elements of British treachery are downplayed, the car's explosive cache is never mentioned and the soldiers who instigated the affair are made victims of an unstable country they are defending.

Hilariously, all of this spin has already landed Iran at the top of the blame game. Because when the war combine botches its own clandestine terrorist acts, what better way to recover than by painting the soulless, freedom-hating country you'd love to invade next as the culprit? In a way, I almost admire the nerve of officials who are able to infer that Basra's riots have nothing to do with fake insurgent bombing raids and everything to do with religious ties to a foreign country. It's a sheer unmitigated gall that flies in the face of logic and reason.

"The Iranians are careful not to be caught," a British official said as the UK threatened to refer Iran to the UN Security Council for sanctions. Too bad the British aren't! Maybe then they'd be able to complete their black-ops mission without looking like complete fools in the process!

Make no mistake – any and all violence to erupt from Basra over this incident lands squarely on the shoulders of the British army and its special forces. Instead of stoking the flames of propaganda against a nation it has no hope of ever conquering, maybe Britain should quit trying to intimidate the Iraqis with fear and torture and start focusing on fixing its mistakes and getting out of the Middle East.

These actions are inexcusable and embarrassing; however, they should make you think. If a country like the United Kingdom is willing to commit acts of terror, what kind of false-flag operations do you think the United States is capable of?

If you thought the U.S. wouldn't blow up people it claims to support in the hopes of advancing its agenda, think again. Use this incident as your first reference point.

Canon Fodder is a weekly analysis of politics and society.
www.thesimon.com/magazine/articles/canon_fodder/0961_fake_terrorism_coalition_best_friend.html

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Who's Blowing Up Iraq? New evidence that bombs are being planted by British
Mike Whitney, September 20, 2005



"The Iraqi security officials on Monday variously accused two Britons they detained of shooting at Iraqi forces or TRYING TO PLANT EXPLOSIVES." Washington Post, Ellen Knickmeyer, 9-20-05; "British Smash into Jail to Free Two Detained Soldiers"

In more than two years since the United States initiated hostilities against Iraq, there has never been a positive identification of Abu Musab al-Zarqawi.
Never.
That doesn't mean that he doesn't exist; it simply suggests that prudent people will challenge the official version until his whereabouts and significance in the conflict can be verified.

At present, much of the rationale for maintaining the occupation depends on this elusive and, perhaps, illusory figure. It's odd how Al-Zarqawi appears at the precise coordinates of America's bombing-raids, and then,

miraculously vanishes unscathed from the scene of the wreckage. This would be a remarkable feat for anyone, but especially for someone who only has one leg.

Al-Zarqawi may simply be a fantasy dreamed up by Pentagon planners to put a threatening face on the Iraqi resistance. The Defense Dept has been aggressive in its effort to shape information in a way that serves the overall objectives of the occupation. The primary aim of the Pentagon's "Strategic Information" program is to distort the truth in a way that controls the storyline created by the media. Al-Zarqawi fits perfectly within this paradigm of intentional deception.

The manipulation of information factors heavily in the steady increase of Iraqi casualties, too. Although the military refuses "to do body counts"; many people take considerable interest in the daily death toll.
Last week, over 200 civilians were killed in seemingly random acts of violence purportedly caused by al-Zarqawi. But, were they?
Were these massive attacks the work of al-Zarqawi as the western media reports or some other "more shadowy" force?

One member of the Iraqi National Assembly. Fatah al-Sheikh, stated, "It seems that the American forces are trying to escalate the situation in order to make the Iraqi people suffer.. There is a huge campaign for the agents of the foreign occupation to enter and plant hatred between the sons of the Iraqi people, and spread rumors in order to scare the one from the other. The occupiers are trying to start religious incitement and if it does not happen, then they will try to start an internal Shiite incitement."

Al-Sheikh's feelings are shared by a great many Iraqis. They can see that everything the US has done, from the forming a government made up predominantly of Shi'ites and Kurds, to creating a constitution that allows the breaking up to the country (federalism), to using the Peshmerga and Badr militia in their attacks on Sunni cities, to building an Interior Ministry entirely comprised of Shi'ites, suggests that the Pentagon's strategy is to fuel the sectarian divisions that will lead to civil war. Al-Zarqawi is an integral facet of this broader plan. Rumsfeld has cast the Jordanian as the agent-provocateur; the driving force behind religious partition and antagonism.

But, al-Zarqawi has nothing to gain by killing innocent civilians, and everything to lose. If he does actually operate in Iraq, he needs logistical supporting all his movements; including help with safe-houses, assistants, and the assurance of invisibility in the community. ("The ocean in which he swims") These would disappear instantly if he recklessly killed and maimed innocent women and children.

Last week the Imam of Baghdad's al-Kazimeya mosque, Jawad al-Kalesi said, that "al-Zarqawi is dead but Washington continues to use him as a bogeyman to justify a prolonged military occupation. He's simply an invention by the occupiers to divide the people." Al-Kalesi added that al-Zarqawi was killed in the beginning of the war in the Kurdish north and that "His family in Jordan even held a ceremony after his death." (AFP)

Most Iraqis probably agree with al-Kalesi, but that hasn't deterred the Pentagon from continuing with the charade. This is understandable given that al-Zarqawi is the last tattered justification for the initial invasion. It's doubtful that the Pentagon will ditch their final threadbare apology for the war. But the reality is vastly different from the spin coming from the military. In fact, foreign fighters play a very small role in Iraq with or without al-Zarqawi. As the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) revealed this week in their report, "Analysts and government officials in the US and Iraq overstated the size of the foreign element in the Iraqi insurgency.. Iraqi fighters made up less than 10% of the armed groups' ranks, perhaps, even half of that." The report poignantly notes that most of the foreign fighters were not previously militants at all, but were motivated by, "revulsion at the idea of an Arab land being occupied by a non-Arab country."

The report concludes that the invasion of Iraq has added thousands of "fresh recruits to Osama bin Laden's network;" a fact that is no longer in dispute among those who have studied the data on the topic.

The al-Zarqawi phantasm is a particularly weak-link in the Pentagon's muddled narrative. The facts neither support the allegations of his participation nor prove that foreigners are a major contributor to the ongoing violence. Instead, the information points to a Defense establishment that cannot be trusted in anything it says and that may be directly involved in the terrorist-bombings that have killed countless thousands of Iraqi civilians.

Regrettably, that is prospect that can't be ignored. After all, no one else benefits from the slaughter.

(Note: Since this article was written, the Washington Post has added to our suspicions. In an Ellen Knickmeyer article "British Smash into Iraqi Jail to free 2 detained Soldiers" 9-20-05, Knickmeyer chronicles the fighting between British forces and Iraqi police who were detaining 2 British commandos. "THE IRAQI SECURITY OFFICIALS ON MONDAY VARIOUSLY ACCUSED THE TWO BRITONS THEY DETAINED OF SHOOTING AT IRAQI FORCES or TRYING TO PLANT EXPLOSIVES."

Is this why the British army was ordered to "burst through the walls of an Iraqi jail Monday in the southern city of Basra".followed by "British armored vehicles backed by helicopter gun-ships" ending in "hours of gun battles and rioting in Basra's streets"? (Washington Post)
Reuters reported that "half a dozen armored vehicles had smashed into the jail" and the provincial governor, Mohammed Walli, told news agencies that the British assault was "barbaric, savage and irresponsible."
So, why were the British so afraid to go through the normal channels to get their men released?
Could it be that the two commandos were "trying to plant explosives" as the article suggests?
An interview on Syrian TV last night also alleges that the British commandos "were planting explosives in one of the Basra streets".

"Al-Munajjid] In fact, Nidal, this incident gave answers to questions and suspicions that were lacking evidence about the participation of the occupation in some armed operations in Iraq. Many analysts and observers here had suspicions that the occupation was involved in some armed operations against civilians and places of worship and in the killing of scientists. But those were only suspicions that lacked proof. The proof came today through the arrest of the two British soldiers while they were planting explosives in one of the Basra streets. This proves, according to observers, that the occupation is not far from many operations that seek to sow sedition and maintain disorder, as this would give the occupation the justification to stay in Iraq for a longer period. [Zaghbur] Ziyad al-Munajjaid in Baghdad, thank you very much. Copyright Syrian Arab TV and BBC Monitoring, 2005"

And then there was this on Al-Jazeera TV, Doha, 9-19-05; Interview with Fattah al-Shayk, member of the National Assembly and deputy for Basra.

."the sons of Basra caught two non-Iraqis, who seem to be Britons and were in a car of the Cressida type. It was a booby-trapped car laden with ammunition and was meant to explode in the centre of the city of Basra in the popular market. However, the sons of the city of Basra arrested them. They [the two non-Iraqis] then fired at the people there and killed some of them. The two arrested persons are now at the Intelligence Department in Basra, and they were held by the National Guard force, but the British occupation forces are still surrounding this department in an attempt to absolve them of the crime."<

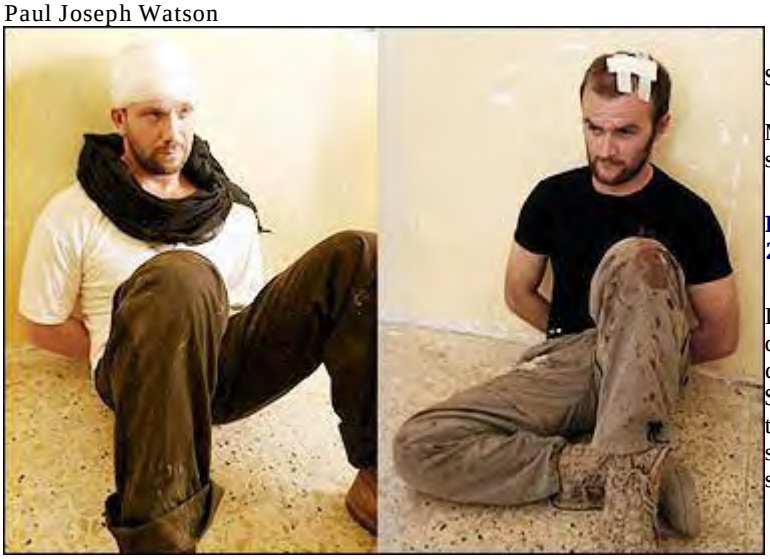
Copyright Al Jazeera TV and BBC Monitoring, 2005 (Thanks to Michel Chossudovsky at Global Research for the quotes from Al Jazeera and Syrian TV)

Does this solve the al-Zarqawi mystery? Are the bombs that are killing so many Iraqi civilians are being planted by British and American Intelligence?
We'll have to see if this damning story can be corroborated by other sources.)

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www.uruknet.info?p=15926

British Special Forces Caught Carrying Out Staged Terror In Iraq?
Paul Joseph Watson



September 20, 2005

Media blackout shadows why black op soldiers were arrested

Paul Joseph Watson | September 20 2005

In another example of how the Iraqi quagmire is deliberately designed to degenerate into a chaotic abyss, British SAS were caught attempting to stage a terror attack and the media have dutifully shut up about the real questions surrounding the incident.

What is admitted is that two British soldiers in Arab garb and head dress drove a car towards a group of Iraq police and began firing. According to the Basra governor Mohammed al-Waili, one policeman was shot dead and another was injured. Pictured below are the wigs and clothing that the soldiers were wearing.

The Arab garb is obviously undeniable proof that the operation, whatever its ultimate intention, was staged so that any eyewitnesses would believe it had been carried out by Iraqis.

This has all the indications of a frame up.



This is made all the more interesting by the fact that early reports cited as originating from BBC World Service radio stated that the car used contained explosives. Was this another staged car bombing intended to keep tensions high? As you will discover later, the plan to keep Iraq divided and in turmoil is an actual policy directive that spans back over two decades.

The **BBC reports** that the car did contain, "assault rifles, a light machine gun, an anti-tank weapon, radio gear and medical kit. This is thought to be standard kit for the SAS operating in such a theatre of operations."

And are fake bushy black wigs and turbans standard kit for the SAS? What happened to the early reports of explosives? Why has the media relentlessly reported on the subsequent rescue effort and failed to address these key questions?

The soldiers were arrested and taken to a nearby jail where they were confronted and interrogated by an Iraqi judge.

The initial demand from the puppet authorities that the soldiers be released was rejected by the Basra government. At that point tanks were sent in to 'rescue' the terrorists and the 'liberated' Iraqis started to riot, firebombing and pelting stones at the vehicles injuring British troops as was depicted in this dramatic Reuters photo.



As the SAS were being rescued 150 prisoners escaped from the jail. Was this intentional or just a result of another botched black op?

From this point on media coverage was monopolized by accounts of the rescue and the giant marauding pink elephant in the living room, namely why the soldiers were arrested in the first place, was routinely ignored.

The only outlet to ask any serious questions was Australian TV news which **according to one viewer** gave, "credibility to the 'conspiracy theorists' who have long claimed many terrorist acts in Iraq are, in fact, being initiated and carried out by US, British and Israeli forces."

Iran's top military commander Brigadier General Mohammad-Baqer Zolqadr pointed the finger at the occupational government last week by **publicly stating,**

“The Americans blame weak and feeble groups in Iraq for insecurity in this country. We do not believe this and we have information that the insecurity has its roots in the activities of American and Israeli spies,” Zolqadr said.

B*Russell*s Tribunal Dossier
Introduction to the "Salvador option" and Iraq's "Death squads" - *PART 2* -

THE BRUSSELLS TRIBUNAL
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"Insecurity in Iraq is a deeply-rooted phenomenon. The root of insecurity in Iraq lies in the occupation of this country by foreigners".

"If Iraq is to become secure, there will be no room for the occupiers".



That explanation has a lot of currency amongst ordinary Iraqis who have been direct witnesses to these bombings.

In the past we've asked questions about why so-called car bombings leave giant craters, in addition with eyewitness reports that helicopters were carrying out the attacks.

Throughout history we see the tactic of **divide and conquer** being used to enslave populations and swallow formerly sovereign countries by piecemeal. From the British stirring up aggression between different Indian tribes in order to foment division, to modern day Yugoslavia where the country was rejecting the IMF and world bank takeover before the Globalists broke it up and took the country piece by piece by arming and empowering extremists.

And so to Iraq, **New York Times November 25th 2003**, Leslie Gelb of the Council on Foreign Relations writes,

"To put most of its money and troops where they would do the most good quickly - with the Kurds and Shiites. The United States could extricate most of its forces from the so-called Sunni Triangle, north and west of Baghdad.... American officials could then wait for the troublesome and domineering Sunnis, without oil or oil revenues, to moderate their ambitions or suffer the consequences."

Gelb argues for allowing the rebellion to escalate in order to create a divided Iraq.

And in 1982, Oded Yinon, an official from the Israeli Foreign Affairs office, wrote: "To dissolve Iraq is even more important for us than dissolving Syria. In the short term, it's Iraqi power that constitutes the greatest threat to Israel. The Iran-Iraq war tore Iraq apart and provoked its downfall. All manner of inter-Arab conflict help us and accelerate our goal of breaking up Iraq into small, diverse pieces."

So if the plan is to keep the different sects at each others' throats then who benefits from the chaos created by the endless bombings? President Bush's **slip of the tongue** when he stated, "it'll take time to restore chaos and order -- order out of chaos, but we will" seems less farcical in this light.

Plans for 4,000 NATO troops to replace US troops in Afghanistan will likely be mirrored in Iraq and the country will be used as a launch pad for the coming invasions of Syria and Iran.

It is certain that any reports coming out of Iraq accusing occupational forces of being behind car bombings will be brutally censored.

The Pentagon admitted before the war that independent journalists would be military targets and since then we've seen more journalists killed in Iraq over two and a half years than the entire seven year stretch of US involvement in Vietnam.

In many cases, **such as that of Mazen Dana**, an acclaimed hero who was killed after filming secret US mass graves, journalists are hunted down and executed because they record something that the occupational government doesn't want to reach the wider world.



Italian journalist **Giuliana Sgrena's car was fired upon** and an Italian secret service agent killed after Sgrena was told by the group that kidnapped her that a threat to kill her if Italian troops didn't pull out of Iraq wasn't made by them. This means that Rumsfeld's Ministry of Truth in Iraq is putting out false statements by fake Jihad groups to try and maintain the facade that the resistance is run by brutal terrorists under the direction of Al-Qaeda/Iran/Syria or whoever else they want to bomb next.

Every high profile kidnapping brings with it eyewitness reports of white men in suits and police carrying out the abductions.

Many will find it hard to believe that ordinary soldiers would have it in them to carry out such brutal atrocities. The people carrying out these acts are not ordinary soldiers, they are SAS thugs who have been told that they have to be 'more evil than the terrorists' to defeat the terrorists. This is how they morally justify to themselves engaging in this criminal behavior.

We will update this story as and when new developments take place.

www.prisonplanet.com/articles/september2005/200905stagedterror.htm

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Were the British Soldiers Engaged in Counter-Insurgency Operation in Basra?
Yamin Zakaria

September 20, 2005

For certain, the 'free', 'independent' and embedded Anglo-US mass media would have tried to spin the evidences surrounding the events in Basra to suit the interests of their governments. However, in this case it was too late, as the facts seemed to have already been reported by various other media outlets. Let us examine what cannot be denied, on the basis of what has been reported and corroborated by the Iraqi police and Interior Ministry officials, who are allies of the coalition forces.

a) British undercover soldiers were on a mission wearing traditional Arab dress, driving a civilian car. What was their mission in Basra, considering that we have hearing how happy and peaceful Shi'ite-dominated Basra is. According to the earlier embedded media reports, resistance is almost negligible in the region.

b) When the Iraqi soldiers (not the Sunni Insurgents), approached the suspicious looking car at a check point, carrying the British soldiers in question, they were fired upon. Clearly, the British Soldiers did not fire in fear but to avoid capture and/or interrogation by the Iraqi police. Therefore, they must have had something significant to hide from the Iraqi police who are their allies in the region. It would be safe to assume that the 'legitimate' Iraqi government installed by the coalition forces were also ignorant of the facts; so far they have been quiet about the whole affair.

c) According to the Italian press, when the British soldiers fired, two Iraqi police were shot and one of them died later. But that matters little for the mass media and no one seems to even know their names. The benevolent liberators are not perturbed by such small details of killing an Iraqi here and there! However, the event raised the temperature even more, after the earlier arrests of two prominent members of the Mehdi army militia (led by the radical Shi'ite cleric, Moqtada al-Sadr), carried out by the British forces.

d) After capture of the undercover British soldiers, they refused to state what their mission was. Iraqis in the mean time had been driving through the streets, with loudhailers demanding that the undercover Britons remain in jail

for their crimes. It was then reported through numerous sources that the British forces with Tanks surrounded the prison, where the two British soldiers in question were detained. This led to the protest developing into a riot and pictures were aired showing the British soldiers being attacked by the mob.

e) An Iraqi Interior Ministry official said British forces stormed and demolished the walls of the jail using six tanks and that dozens of Iraqi prisoners escaped. Basra's governor said the demolition was a "barbaric act of aggression".

f) However, Britain's Ministry of Defence disputed that the prison had been stormed, on the contrary, stated that the release of the two soldiers was negotiated. Contradicting the statement of the Basra governor and the numerous reports (point d), that clearly alluded to the British forces action to release the British prisoners sparked of the riot. Why was there no statement from the so-called new Iraqi government?

Whatever the case, the British forces were not happy with two of their soldiers kept in an Iraqi prison, controlled by their Iraqi allies. Inside the prison, their lives were not under any threat. But what the two soldiers concealed as regards to their mission must have really worried the British government. Thus, they moved quickly to get the undercover soldiers out of the prisons by storming it with Tanks and demolishing the walls.

Now, what has been deliberately avoided by the mainstream TV and Satellite stations is the reference [1] to allegation from the Iraqi police, that the British soldiers were planting bombs. Turkish and a few other media outlets also reported that the Iraqi police allegedly found bombs in unidentified cars owned by Britons.

So the facts are, the British soldiers were caught wearing Arab dress in a civilian car, armed, may have been carrying bombs, shot the Iraqi soldiers when approached by them, later the British government in desperation stormed the prison to get them out; clearly they were on a secret mission. It was secret because it would be too embarrassing to conduct openly in an area that is supposed to be the calmest with no insurgency. Given the facts, the only plausible explanation is that the undercover soldiers were engaged in counter-insurgency operations. This incident may well prove to be another Abu-Ghraib, confirming the strong rumours of counter-insurgency operations, particularly the bombs exploding in the markets and mosques, away from coalition and Iraqi forces that would benefit no one, except the coalition forces.

Without a shadow of doubt, a full scale sectarian war would help the collation forces; they would be the primary beneficiary. In fact from the very beginning of the conflict the media has been constantly stoking sectarian tensions, the language employed was crafted accordingly. They kept on repeating minority Sunni Arabs of 20%, who become minority Sunnis of 20%! The majority Shi'ites became the oppressed Shi'ites, as if the hearts of the Anglo-US government bleeds for them! The Arab nationalist Baath party became a Sunni party, as if religion defined it!

But the sectarian conflict failed to ignite, and then the coalition forces engaged in counter-insurgency activities by exploding bombs in markets, mosques and churches. There have been earlier reports and independent eyewitness accounts of coalition soldiers caught planting bombs. However, like hurricane Katrina, this time they were caught and exposed, the world can now see their fork-tongue and insidious nature.

Yamin Zakaria
London, UK

[1] http://www.iraqwar.mirror-world.ru/article/63808

iraqwar.mirror-world.ru/article/63926

B*Russell*s Tribunal Dossier
Introduction to the "Salvador option" and Iraq's "Death squads" - *PART 3* -

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Sectarianism

During the forty years of their control over Iraq, the British deepened ethnic divisions by favoring the Sunnis and other minorities while ruling harshly over the Shia and the Kurds. But Iraqi nationalist politics at that time was secular and, in spite of British “divide and rule” policies, the nationalists successfully united the various ethnic and religious groups, developing a powerful support for national unity. Saddam Hussein's secular regime likewise played on ethnic and religious differences as a strategy of rule. Saddam favored the Sunnis and placed many restrictions on the Shia majority. But the regime directed its worst treatment at the Kurds, who carried on a sporadic armed struggle for autonomy, sometimes with support from Iran, Israel and Washington. Operation Anfal in 1988 killed many Kurds and destroyed 2000 villages, displacing large numbers of Kurds from their mountain areas. Saddam’s regime also harshly suppressed a Shiite uprising in the South after the 1991 Gulf War.

During the 1990s, the US and UK patrolled "no-fly zones" over Iraq, claiming to protect vulnerable civilians in the (largely Kurdish) north and the (largely Shia) south. These no-fly zones effectively divided the country into three areas and Kurdish militia came to dominate the north militarily. Separate treatment of the north under the UN Oil-for-Food Programme further fostered autonomy from the central government. These moves set the stage for regional/ethnic separatism and a re-conception of Iraq by some hardliners as three nations within one state.

The US occupation of Iraq further deepened sectarian tensions. As the US searched for Iraqi political collaborators to establish a pro-occupation government, it marginalized the secular political forces, seen as too nationalist, in favor of more compliant religious parties and groupings. The growing Iraqi resistance hardened the occupiers' opposition to nationalism in all its forms. The US promoted (and the mass media accepted) an ethnic/religious conception of Iraqi politics that did not acknowledge the long supremacy of secular nationalism and did not reflect the complex ethnic mix and the diversity of many Iraqi cities and regions, such as Mosul, Basrah and especially multi-ethnic Baghdad. US military tactics, such as the use of Kurds and Shia to police Sunni towns, worsened relations between religious communities.

Sectarian differences have now worsened, due to the struggle over Iraq's constitution and a parallel battle over oil resources, largely located in the South and the North. In addition, many Christians and secular Iraqis, who might have been a force of moderation, have fled the country, fearing the growing power of the Islamist parties. The economic distress, high unemployment and general chaos of the occupation have stoked the tensions. The resulting poisonous political mix could degenerate into inter-communal violence and ethnic cleansing similar to the conflicts in former Yugoslavia and Lebanon. But a prolonged occupation, far from mitigating these developments, will only deepen the sectarian divides and stoke the animosities.
http://www.globalpolicy.org/security/issues/iraq/sectarianindex.htm

CIA death squads operating in Iraq

By Henry Michaels
8 April 2003

The longer the Iraq war continues, the more Orwellian the language and the more sinister the methods adopted by the Bush administration and its allies. While President Bush and his officials depict Iraqis resisting the US-led invasion as "terrorists" and "death squads," CIA and Special Forces assassination squads are at work in Iraq, seeking to eliminate Iraqi leaders and other opponents of the US occupation of the country.

In the language of the White House and Pentagon, the thousands of Iraqi citizens in plainclothes—whether ordinary people, militia members or soldiers—who are resisting the invading forces in any way they can, are "war criminals." But the undercover US hit squads and other military-intelligence operatives roaming throughout Iraq in civilian clothes, terrorizing the population, are "heroes" in the cause of democracy and liberation.

While the Western media has largely blacked coverage of the US killers, one report in the Canadian *National Post* last week briefly mentioned the presence of special operations troops in civilian clothes as US Marines reached southern Baghdad. "Special forces were also out in large numbers in their distinctive fighting gear, which includes baseball caps, jeans, expensive sunglasses and specially adapted rifles," it noted.

There is a fundamental difference between the Iraqis who are defending their country and the US, British and Australian special operations units that are operating secretly, often in civilian disguise. Whereas the Iraqis are legitimately targeting Allied military personnel for ambushes, sniper fire and surprise bombings, the US-led squads are illegally hunting down civilians and government figures, sabotaging civilian facilities and arming selected local thugs to execute reprisals, flouting the international laws of war.

In the face of widespread popular resistance, these "unconventional warfare" operations are escalating, but they have been under way for many months. Well before Bush formally declared war on Iraq, US intelligence and military operatives were in Baghdad and throughout Iraq, aiming to locate and kill Saddam Hussein and other leaders. British and Australian Special Air Services (SAS) commandos were also active in the west and north of Iraq.

Citing intelligence sources, United Press International reported last week that the unsuccessful bombing operation to murder Saddam Hussein and his family and cabinet ministers on March 20 was preceded by intensive infiltration of CIA agents into Baghdad, the recruitment of Iraqi spies and the insertion of special operations troops into the capital.

According to UPI: "The March 20 operation involved more than 300 Special Forces, who moved into the country to join Delta troops and CIA paramilitaries, these sources said. One former long-time CIA operative said it was the Delta men, already in the country, who made the breakthrough for the US attack by infiltrating a key Baghdad telecommunications center and tapping a fiber optic telephone line.

"It was this that enabled the US clandestine team to locate Saddam and top leaders at Dora Farm, an Iraqi command and control complex and a legitimate war target, US officials said. Iraqi assets [spies], recruited by the agency, played a key part in the operation by providing 'priceless' information, relating to the phone system and details of Dora Farm, according to one former senior CIA official."

Having failed to "decapitate" the Iraqi government, such operations nevertheless remain one of Washington's top objectives. UPI reported: "CIA paramilitary teams, working with Delta Forces, still are inside Iraq, attempting to kill 30 top Iraqi leaders, including Saddam's other son, Uday, who commands the Iraqi Fedayeen, several US sources said. One administration official confirmed that US intelligence has the names, addresses and cell phone numbers of the 30 targets."

Last Wednesday, acting on CIA information, a helicopter formation raided the Tharthar Palace, one of many residences allegedly used by Hussein and his sons, about 55 miles outside Baghdad.

Reporting on the "unseen" war in Iraq conducted by teams of CIA paramilitary and Special Forces operatives, the *Christian Science Monitor* quoted retired US Brigadier General John Reppert: "That is certainly the strategy now. And decapitation as a strategy works well beyond Saddam Hussein. It takes in his Revolutionary Council, leaders of his Baath Party, and below that, the four divisions of the Republican Guard plus the one Special Republican Guard unit."

As these comments suggest, the special forces' targets extend well beyond the Iraqi leadership. An on-the-spot-report from the city of Najaf published by the London-based *Financial Times* on April 5 provided a glimpse of the methods being employed in urban areas:

"The people of Najaf were introduced to their new government this week—a virtually unknown opposition group that claims to represent all Iraqis, cruises around the streets on US special forces vehicles, and is doing its best to present itself as part of a spontaneous 'intifada' against the Iraqi regime."

Members of the group, called the Iraqi Coalition for National Unity (ICNU), "rarely stray from their US vehicles and special forces minders, grinning broadly for cameras from atop Humvees and raising their weapons in victory.... Co-ordination between ICNU and US ground forces in Najaf is tight, handled by special forces and CIA operatives."

Nevertheless, the newspaper reported, the ICNU and its sponsors had failed to subdue the city, which hosts Shia Muslim holy sites. US troops patrolled during the day but withdrew at night, looting by hungry crowds was commonplace, and Shia religious leaders had refused to negotiate directly with US commanders, regarding them as an occupying force.

Elsewhere, including in the northern Kurdish areas, allied operatives are financing and arming tribal leaders, ethnic militias and local thugs, employing similar techniques to Afghanistan, where the CIA paid millions of dollars to regional warlords to fight against the Taliban regime. "I'm sure we've got guys with 80-pound rucksacks full of $100 bills," a former CIA station chief told the *Los Angeles Times*. "I'm sure we're buying up some folks."

Well before the war began, huge payments were channeled through networks of Iraqi agents recruited by the CIA and MI6, the British spy agency, to encourage uprisings against the Iraqi government. Up until now, however, these efforts have not borne fruit.

Revealing cover-up at Pentagon briefing

At an April 4 Pentagon media briefing, Army Major General Stanley McChrystal boasted that the contribution of special forces to the US operation had been "unprecedented." Another senior official, speaking on condition of anonymity, said more than 10,000 special operations troops were involved in Iraq—the largest number for any US war since Vietnam.

There was a revealing exchange when a journalist asked the following question:

"Can you help us to understand one of the points—one of the arguments made by the administration on the 'war criminals' tag? Obviously, the administration has seen a number of irregular practices on the part of the Iraqis. One of them in particular puzzles me. When they take off their uniforms and fight in civilian clothes, why is that a war crime? Because US Special Forces do it and did it in Afghanistan—they didn't behave in the same way, but why is the act of fighting without a uniform considered a war crime?"

McChrystal could not answer the question, becoming flummoxed as he tried unsuccessfully to draw a distinction between the tasks being performed by US personnel and Iraqi civilians. Victoria Clarke, spokeswoman for Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld, quickly stepped in to shut down the line of questioning.

"I'd actually like to take that question, because I don't think you're right about that," she told the journalist. After a pause, Clarke said the Pentagon would respond later.

Another journalist asked if US forces were under any “special instructions” if they found Saddam Hussein or other senior Iraqi leader. Clarke immediately told McChrystal, “You don’t need to answer his question.”

After the press conference, officials said US special forces in Iraq “are wearing uniforms,” but declined to say if they were full uniforms or modified. Clarke’s abrupt intervention at the briefing suggests acute awareness in the administration that its officials and military commanders are the ones committing war crimes in Iraq.

The methods being used in Iraq will soon become as notorious as the CIA-backed coup in Iran in 1953 to install the cruel regime of the Shah, the “Operation Phoenix” killing program in Vietnam, and the 1973 overthrow of the Allende government in Chile, to name but a few of US imperialism’s crimes.

http://www.wsws.org/articles/2003/apr2003/cia-a08.shtml

US decides to back Iraqi militia force

November 6, 2003

The US administrator of Iraq, Paul Bremer, has given conditional support to the creation of an Iraqi-led paramilitary force to track down resistance fighters who have eluded US troops.

Iraq's US-appointed Governing Council wants the force to include a domestic intelligence-gathering unit and to have broad powers to conduct raids and interrogate suspects.

It would be made up of former members of the security services and political party militias. This has fuelled concern among some US officials that it could be used for undemocratic purposes, such as stifling political dissent.

But the council's leaders say Iraq's municipal police departments are too weak, and US soldiers too lacking in local knowledge to combat the seemingly co-ordinated efforts of supporters of former president Saddam Hussein, Islamic militants and foreign guerillas apparently attacking American forces and Iraqis co-operating with the US-led occupation.

"We need a security force that is run by Iraqis, that is more heavily armed than the police and is able to act quickly," a senior Iraqi National Congress official said.

With resistance attacks becoming more aggressive, the council urged the US Government on Tuesday for more authority to deal with security matters. Jalal Talabani, the current council president, said in a letter to President George Bush that Iraqis "are more able than others to handle this matter".

Although Mr Bremer initially opposed the creation of a paramilitary force, he has softened his position as attacks have increased. But he wants to impose conditions involving the vetting, training and supervising the participants, a US official said.

Council leaders said they want the force to be drawn primarily from former members of the military and police, and members of the security and intelligence wings of five political organisations - the Iraqi National Accord, the Iraqi National Congress, the Shiite Muslim Supreme Council for the Islamic Revolution in Iraq and two large Kurdish parties, the Kurdistan Democratic Party and the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan.

"We have very well-established intelligence networks," the Iraqi National Congress official said.

US and British officials involved in security matters in Iraq say they believe the potential gains outweigh the risks of having Iraqis assuming a more active role in hunting down resistance fighters.

Until now, Iraqi police officers, mostly with inadequate training and equipment, have been reluctant to take up that task. ☐ Two United Nations officials in charge of security at the Baghdad mission when it was bombed in August - Tun Myat and Ramiro Lopes da Silva - have been sent on leave while a team of independent experts determines responsibility for the security flaws at the mission, a UN spokesman said on Tuesday.

The announcement coincided with the appointment of an investigative team, led by a retired career UN official, that will "determine accountability at all managerial levels at headquarters and in the field" before the attack on August 19 which killed 22 people, the spokesman said.

The Washington Post, The New York Times

This story was found at:

http://www.smh.com.au/articles/2003/11/05/1068013265653.html

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Annals of National Security

MOVING TARGETS

Will the counter-insurgency plan in Iraq repeat the mistakes of Vietnam?

by Seymour M. Hersh December 15, 2003

The Bush Administration has authorized a major escalation of the Special Forces covert war in Iraq. In interviews over the past month, American officials and former officials said that the main target was a hard-core group of Baathists who are believed to be behind much of the underground insurgency against the soldiers of the United States and its allies. A new Special Forces group, designated Task Force 121, has been assembled from Army Delta Force members, Navy seals, and C.I.A. paramilitary operatives, with many additional personnel ordered to report by January. Its highest priority is the neutralization of the Baathist insurgents, by capture or assassination.

The revitalized Special Forces mission is a policy victory for Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld, who has struggled for two years to get the military leadership to accept the strategy of what he calls “Manhunts”—a phrase that he has used both publicly and in internal Pentagon communications. Rumsfeld has had to change much of the Pentagon’s leadership to get his way. “Knocking off two regimes allows us to do extraordinary things,” a Pentagon adviser told me, referring to Afghanistan and Iraq.

One step the Pentagon took was to seek active and secret help in the war against the Iraqi insurgency from Israel, America’s closest ally in the Middle East. According to American and Israeli military and intelligence officials, Israeli commandos and intelligence units have been working closely with their American counterparts at the Special Forces training base at Fort Bragg, North Carolina, and in Israel to help them prepare for operations in Iraq. Israeli commandos are expected to serve as ad-hoc advisers—again, in secret—when full-field operations begin. (Neither the Pentagon nor Israeli diplomats would comment. “No one wants to talk about this,” an Israeli official told me. “It’s incendiary. Both governments have decided at the highest level that it is in their interests to keep a low profile on U.S.-Israeli coöperation” on Iraq.) The critical issue, American and Israeli officials agree, is intelligence. There is much debate about whether targeting a large number of individuals is a practical—or politically effective—way to bring about stability in Iraq, especially given the frequent failure of American forces to obtain consistent and reliable information there.

Americans in the field are trying to solve that problem by developing a new source of information: they plan to assemble teams drawn from the upper ranks of the old Iraqi intelligence services and train them to penetrate the insurgency. The idea is for the infiltrators to provide information about individual insurgents for the Americans to act on. A former C.I.A. station chief described the strategy

in simple terms: “U.S. shooters and Iraqi intelligence.” He added, “There are Iraqis in the intelligence business who have a better idea, and we’re tapping into them. We have to resuscitate Iraqi intelligence, holding our nose, and have Delta and agency shooters break down doors and take them”—the insurgents—“out.”

A former intelligence official said that getting inside the Baathist leadership could be compared to “fighting your way into a coconut—you bang away and bang away until you find a soft spot, and then you can clean it out.” An American who has advised the civilian authority in Baghdad said, “The only way we can win is to go unconventional. We’re going to have to play their game. Guerrilla versus guerrilla. Terrorism versus terrorism. We’ve got to scare the Iraqis into submission.”
In Washington, there is now widespread agreement on one point: the need for a new American approach to Iraq. There is also uniform criticism of the military’s current response to the growing American casualty lists. One former Pentagon official who worked extensively with the Special Forces command, and who favors the new military initiative, said, “We’ve got this large conventional force sitting there, and getting their ass shot off, and what we’re doing is counterproductive. We’re sending mixed signals.” The problem with the way the U.S. has been fighting the Baathist leadership, he said, is “(a) we’ve got no intelligence, and (b) we’re too squeamish to operate in this part of the world.” Referring to the American retaliation against a suspected mortar site, the former official said, “Instead of destroying an empty soccer field, why not impress me by sneaking in a sniper team and killing them while they’re setting up a mortar? We do need a more unconventional response, but it’s going to be messy.”

Inside the Pentagon, it is now understood that simply bringing in or killing Saddam Hussein and his immediate circle—those who appeared in the Bush Administration’s famed “deck of cards”—will not stop the insurgency. The new Special Forces operation is aimed instead at the broad middle of the Baathist underground. But many of the officials I spoke to were skeptical of the Administration’s plans. Many of them fear that the proposed operation—called “preëmptive manhunting” by one Pentagon adviser—has the potential to turn into another Phoenix Program. Phoenix was the code name for a counter-insurgency program that the U.S. adopted during the Vietnam War, in which Special Forces teams were sent out to capture or assassinate Vietnamese believed to be working with or sympathetic to the Vietcong. In choosing targets, the Americans relied on information supplied by South Vietnamese Army officers and village chiefs. The operation got out of control. According to official South Vietnamese statistics, Phoenix claimed nearly forty-one thousand victims between 1968 and 1972; the U.S. counted more than twenty thousand in the same time span. Some of those assassinated had nothing to do with the war against America but were targeted because of private grievances. William E. Colby, the C.I.A. officer who took charge of the Phoenix Program in 1968 (he eventually became C.I.A. director), later acknowledged to Congress that “a lot of things were done that should not have been done.”

The former Special Forces official warned that the problem with head-hunting is that you have to be sure “you’re hunting the right heads.” Speaking of the now coöperative former Iraqi intelligence officials, he said, “These guys have their own agenda. Will we be doing hits on grudges? When you set

up host-nation elements"—units composed of Iraqis, rather than Americans—"it's hard not to have them going off to do what they want to do. You have to keep them on a short leash."

The former official says that the Baathist leadership apparently relies on "face-to-face communications" in planning terrorist attacks. This makes the insurgents less vulnerable to one of the Army's most secret Special Forces units, known as Grey Fox, which has particular expertise in interception and other technical means of intelligence-gathering. "These guys are too smart to touch cell phones or radio," the former official said. "It's all going to succeed or fail spectacularly based on human intelligence."

A former C.I.A. official with extensive Middle East experience identified one of the key players on the new American-Iraqi intelligence team as Farouq Hijazi, a Saddam loyalist who served for many years as the director of external operations for the Mukhabarat, the Iraqi intelligence service. He has been in custody since late April. The C.I.A. man said that over the past few months Hijazi "has cut a deal," and American officials "are using him to reactivate the old Iraqi intelligence network." He added, "My Iraqi friends say he will honor the deal—but only to the letter, and not to the spirit." He said that although the Mukhabarat was a good security service, capable, in particular, of protecting Saddam Hussein from overthrow or assassination, it was "a lousy intelligence service."

The official went on, "It's not the way we usually play ball, but if you see a couple of your guys get blown away it changes things. We did the American things—and we've been the nice guy. Now we're going to be the bad guy, and being the bad guy works."

Told of such comments, the Pentagon adviser, who is an expert on unconventional war, expressed dismay. "There are people saying all sorts of wild things about Manhunts," he said. "But they aren't at the policy level. It's not a no-holds policy, and it shouldn't be. I'm as tough as anybody, but we're also a democratic society, and we don't fight terror with terror. There will be a lot of close controls—do's and don'ts and rules of engagement." The adviser added, "The problem is that we've not penetrated the bad guys. The Baath Party is run like a cell system. It's like penetrating the Vietcong—we never could do it." The rising star in Rumsfeld's Pentagon is Stephen Cambone, the Under-Secretary of Defense for Intelligence, who has been deeply involved in developing the new Special Forces approach. Cambone, who earned a doctorate in political science from Claremont Graduate University in 1982, served as staff director for a 1998 committee, headed by Rumsfeld, that warned in its report of an emerging ballistic-missile threat to the United States and argued that intelligence agencies should be willing to go beyond the data at hand in their analyses. Cambone, in his confirmation hearings, in February, told the Senate that consumers of intelligence assessments must ask questions of the analysts—"how they arrived at those conclusions and what the sources of the information were." This approach was championed by Rumsfeld. It came under attack, however, when the Administration's predictions about Iraq's weapons of mass destruction and the potential for insurgency failed to be realized, and the Pentagon civilians were widely accused of politicizing intelligence. (A month after the fall of Baghdad, Cambone was the first senior Pentagon official to publicly claim, wrongly, as it turned out, that a captured Iraqi military truck might be a mobile biological-weapons laboratory.)

Cambone also shares Rumsfeld's views on how to fight terrorism. They both believe that the United States needs to become far more proactive in combatting terrorism, searching for terrorist leaders around the world and eliminating them. And Cambone, like Rumsfeld, has been frustrated by the reluctance of the military leadership to embrace the manhunting mission. Since his confirmation, he has been seeking operational authority over Special Forces. "Rumsfeld's been looking for somebody to have all the answers, and Steve is the guy," a former high-level Pentagon official told me. "He has more direct access to Rummy than anyone else."

As Cambone's influence has increased, that of Douglas Feith, the Under-Secretary of Defense for Policy, has diminished. In September, 2001, Feith set up a special unit known as the Office of Special Plans. The office, directed by civilians who, like Feith, had neoconservative views, played a major role in the intelligence and planning leading up to the March invasion of Iraq. "There is finger-pointing going on," a prominent Republican lobbyist explained. "And the neocons are in retreat."

One of the key planners of the Special Forces offensive is Lieutenant General William (Jerry) Boykin, Cambone's military assistant. After a meeting with Rumsfeld early last summer—they got along "like two old warriors," the Pentagon consultant said—Boykin postponed his retirement, which had been planned for June, and took the Pentagon job, which brought him a third star. In that post, the Pentagon adviser told me, Boykin has been "an important piece" of the planned escalation. In October, the Los Angeles *Times* reported that Boykin, while giving Sunday-morning talks in uniform to church groups, had repeatedly equated the Muslim world with Satan. Last June, according to the paper, he told a congregation in Oregon that "Satan wants to destroy this nation, he wants to destroy us as a nation, and he wants to destroy us as a Christian army." Boykin praised President Bush as a "man who prays in the Oval Office," and declared that Bush was "not elected" President but "appointed by God." The Muslim world hates America, he said, "because we are a nation of believers."

There were calls in the press and from Congress for Boykin's dismissal, but Rumsfeld made it clear that he wanted to keep his man in the job. Initially, he responded to the *Times* report by praising the General's "outstanding record" and telling journalists that he had neither seen the text of Boykin's statements nor watched the videotape that had been made of one of his presentations. "There are a lot of things that are said by people in the military, or in civilian life, or in the Congress, or in the executive branch that are their views," he said. "We're a free people. And that's the wonderful thing about our country." He added, with regard to the tape, "I just simply can't comment on what he said, because I haven't seen it." Four days later, Rumsfeld said that he had viewed the tape. "It had a lot of very difficult-to-understand words with subtitles which I was not able to verify," he said at a news conference, according to the official transcript. "So I remain inexpert"—the transcript notes that he "chuckles" at that moment—"on precisely what he said." Boykin's comments are now under official review.

Boykin has been involved in other controversies as well. He was the Army combat commander in Mogadishu in 1993, when eighteen Americans were slain during the disastrous mission made famous

by Mark Bowden's book "Black Hawk Down." Earlier that year, Boykin, a colonel at the time, led an eight-man Delta Force that was assigned to help a Colombian police unit track down the notorious drug dealer Pablo Escobar. Boykin's team was barred by law from providing any lethal assistance without Presidential approval, but there was suspicion in the Pentagon that it was planning to take part in the assassination of Escobar, with the support of American Embassy officials in Colombia. The book "Killing Pablo," an account, also by Mark Bowden, of the hunt for Escobar, describes how senior officials in the Pentagon's chain of command became convinced that Boykin, with the knowledge of his Special Forces superiors, had exceeded his authority and intended to violate the law. They wanted Boykin's unit pulled out. It wasn't. Escobar was shot dead on the roof of a barrio apartment building in Medellín. The Colombian police were credited with getting their man, but, Bowden wrote, "within the special ops community . . . Pablo's death was regarded as a successful mission for Delta, and legend has it that its operators were in on the kill."

"That's what those guys did," a retired general who monitored Boykin's operations in Colombia told me. "I've seen pictures of Escobar's body that you don't get from a long-range telescope lens. They were taken by guys on the assault team." (Bush Administration officials in the White House, the State Department, and the Pentagon, including General Boykin, did not respond to requests for comment.)

Morris Busby, who was the American Ambassador to Colombia in 1993 (he is now retired), vigorously defended Boykin. "I think the world of Jerry Boykin, and have the utmost respect for him. I've known him for fifteen years and spent hours and hours with the guy, and never heard him mention religion or God." The retired general also praised Boykin as "one of those guys you'd love to have in a war because he's not afraid to die." But, he added, "when you get to three stars you've got to think through what you're doing." Referring to Boykin and others involved in the Special Forces planning, he added, "These guys are going to get a bunch of guys killed and then give them a bunch of medals."

The American-Israeli liaison on Iraq amounts to a tutorial on how to dismantle an insurgency. One former Israeli military-intelligence officer summarized the core lesson this way: "How to do targeted killing, which is very relevant to the success of the war, and what the United States is going to have to do." He told me that the Americans were being urged to emulate the Israeli Army's small commando units, known as Mist'aravim, which operate undercover inside the West Bank and Gaza Strip. "They can approach a house and pounce," the former officer said. In the Israeli view, he added, the Special Forces units must learn "how to maintain a network of informants." Such a network, he said, has made it possible for Israel to penetrate the West Bank and Gaza Strip organizations controlled by groups such as Hamas, and to assassinate or capture potential suicide bombers along with many of the people who recruit and train them.

On the other hand, the former officer said, "Israel has, in many ways, been too successful, and has killed or captured so many mid-ranking facilitators on the operational level in the West Bank that Hamas now consists largely of isolated cells that carry out terrorist attacks against Israel on their own." He went on, "There is no central control over many of the suicide bombers. We're trying to tell

the Americans that they don't want to eliminate the center. The key is not to have freelancers out there."

Many regional experts, Americans and others, are convinced that the Baathists are still firmly in charge of the insurgency, although they are thought to have little direct connection with Saddam Hussein. An American military analyst who works with the American-led Coalition Provisional Authority in Baghdad told me he has concluded that "mid-ranking Baathists who were muzzled by the patrimonial nature of Saddam's system have now, with the disappearance of the high-ranking members, risen to control the insurgency." He added that after the American attack and several weeks "of being like deer in headlights," these Baathists had become organized, and were directing and leading operations against Americans. During an interview in Washington, a senior Arab diplomat noted, "We do not believe that the resistance is loyal to Saddam. Yes, the Baathists have reorganized, not for political reasons but because of the terrible decisions made by Jerry Bremer"—the director of the C.P.A. "The Iraqis really want to make you pay the price," the diplomat said. "Killing Saddam will not end it."

Similarly, a Middle Eastern businessman who has advised senior Bush Administration officials told me that the reorganized Baath Party is "extremely active, working underground with permanent internal communications. And without Saddam." Baath party leaders, he added, expect Saddam to issue a public statement of self-criticism, "telling of his mistakes and his excesses," including his reliance on his sons.

There is disagreement, inevitably, on the extent of Baathist control. The former Israeli military-intelligence officer said, "Most of the firepower comes from the Baathists, and they know where the weapons are kept. But many of the shooters are ethnic and tribal. Iraq is very factionalized now, and within the Sunni community factionalism goes deep." He added, "Unless you settle this, any effort at reconstruction in the center is hopeless."

The American military analyst agreed that the current emphasis on Baathist control "overlooks the nationalist and tribal angle." For example, he said, the anti-coalition forces in Falluja, a major center of opposition, are "driven primarily by the sheikhs and mosques, Islam, clerics, and nationalism." The region, he went on, contains "tens of thousands of unemployed former military officers and enlistees who hang around the coffee shops and restaurants of their relatives; they plot, plan, and give and receive instructions; at night they go out on their missions."

This military analyst, like many officials I spoke to, also raised questions about the military's more conventional tactics—the aggressive program, code-named Iron Hammer, of bombings, nighttime raids, and mass arrests aimed at trouble spots in Sunni-dominated central Iraq. The insurgents, he told me, had already developed a response. "Their S.O.P."—standard operating procedure—"now is to go further out, or even to other towns, so that American retribution does not fall on their locale. Instead, the Americans take it out on the city where the incident happened, and in the process they succeed in making more enemies."

The brazen Iraqi attacks on two separate American convoys in Samarra, on November 30th, provided further evidence of the diversity of the opposition to the occupation. Samarra has been a center of intense anti-Saddam feelings, according to Ahmed S. Hashim, an expert on terrorism who is a professor of strategic studies at the U.S. Naval War College. In an essay published in August by the Middle East Institute, Hashim wrote, "Many Samarra natives—who had served with distinction in the Baath Party and the armed forces—were purged or executed during the course of the three decades of rule by Saddam and his cronies from the rival town of Tikrit." He went on, "The type of U.S. force structure in Iraq—heavy armored and mechanized units—and the psychological disposition of these forces which have been in Iraq for months is simply not conducive to the successful waging of counter-insurgency warfare."

The majority of the Bush Administration's manhunting missions remain classified, but one earlier mission, in Afghanistan, had mixed results at best. Last November, an Al Qaeda leader named Qaed Salim Sinan al-Harethi was killed when an unmanned Predator reconnaissance aircraft fired a Hellfire missile at his automobile in Yemen. Five passengers in the automobile were also killed, and it was subsequently reported that two previous Predator missions in Yemen had been called off at the last moment when it was learned that the occupants of suspect vehicles were local Bedouins, and not Al Qaeda members.

Since then, an adviser to the Special Forces command has told me, infighting among the various senior military commands has made it difficult for Special Forces teams on alert to take immediate advantage of time-sensitive intelligence. Rumsfeld repeatedly criticized Air Force General Charles Holland, a four-star Special Forces commander who has just retired, for his reluctance to authorize commando raids without specific, or "actionable," intelligence. Rumsfeld has also made a systematic effort to appoint Special Forces advocates to the top military jobs. Another former Special Forces commander, Army General Peter Schoomaker, was brought out of retirement in July and named Army Chief of Staff. The new civilian Assistant Secretary for Special Operations in the Pentagon is Thomas O'Connell, an Army veteran who served in the Phoenix program in Vietnam, and who, in the early eighties, ran Grey Fox, the Army's secret commando unit.

Early in November, the *Times* reported the existence of Task Force 121, and said that it was authorized to take action throughout the region, if necessary, in pursuit of Saddam Hussein, Osama bin Laden, and other terrorists. (The task force is commanded by Air Force Brigadier General Lyle Koenig, an experienced Special Forces helicopter pilot.) At that point, the former Special Forces official told me, the troops were "chasing the deck of cards. Their job was to find Saddam, period." Other Special Forces, in Afghanistan, were targeting what is known as the A.Q.S.L., the Al Qaeda Senior Leadership List.

The task force's search for Saddam was, from the beginning, daunting. According to Scott Ritter, a former United Nations weapons inspector, it may have been fatally flawed as well. From 1994 to 1998, Ritter directed a special U.N. unit that eavesdropped on many of Saddam Hussein's private telephone communications. "The high-profile guys around Saddam were the *murafaqin*, his most loyal

companions, who could stand next to him carrying a gun," Ritter told me. "But now he's gone to a different tier—the tribes. He has released the men from his most sensitive units and let them go back to their tribes, and we don't know where they are. The manifests of those units are gone; they've all been destroyed." Ritter added, "Guys like Farouq Hijazi can deliver some of the Baath Party cells, and he knows where some of the intelligence people are. But he can't get us into the tribal hierarchy." The task force, in any event, has shifted its focus from the hunt for Saddam as it is increasingly distracted by the spreading guerrilla war.

In addition to the Special Forces initiative, the military is also exploring other approaches to suppressing the insurgency. The Washington *Post* reported last week that the American authorities in Baghdad had agreed, with some reluctance, to the formation of an Iraqi-led counter-terrorism militia composed of troops from the nation's five largest political parties. The paramilitary unit, totalling some eight hundred troops or so, would "identify and pursue insurgents" who had eluded arrest, the newspaper said. The group's initial missions would be monitored and approved by American commanders, but eventually it would operate independently.

Task Force 121's next major problem may prove to be Iran. There is a debate going on inside the Administration about American and Israeli intelligence that suggests that the Shiite-dominated Iranian government may be actively aiding the Sunni-led insurgency in Iraq—"pulling the strings on the puppet," as one former intelligence official put it. Many in the intelligence community are skeptical of this analysis—the Pentagon adviser compared it to "the Chalabi stuff," referring to now discredited prewar intelligence on W.M.D. supplied by Iraqi defectors. But I was told by several officials that the intelligence was considered to be highly reliable by civilians in the Defense Department. A former intelligence official said that one possible response under consideration was for the United States to train and equip an Iraqi force capable of staging cross-border raids. The American goal, he said, would be to "make the cost of supporting the Baathists so dear that the Iranians would back off," adding, "If it begins to look like another Iran-Iraq war, that's another story."

The requirement that America's Special Forces units operate in secrecy, a former senior coalition adviser in Baghdad told me, has provided an additional incentive for increasing their presence in Iraq. The Special Forces in-country numbers are not generally included in troop totals. Bush and Rumsfeld have insisted that more American troops are not needed, but that position was challenged by many senior military officers in private conversations with me. "You need more people," the former adviser, a retired admiral, said. "But you can't add them, because Rummy's taken a position. So you invent a force that won't be counted."

At present, there is no legislation that requires the President to notify Congress before authorizing an overseas Special Forces mission. The Special Forces have been expanded enormously in the Bush Administration. The 2004 Pentagon budget provides more than six and a half billion dollars for their activities—a thirty-four-per-cent increase over 2003. A recent congressional study put the number of active and reserve Special Forces troops at forty-seven thousand, and has suggested that the

appropriate House and Senate committees needed to debate the "proper overall role" of Special Forces in the global war on terrorism.

The former intelligence official depicted the Delta and seal teams as "force multipliers"—small units that can do the work of much larger ones and thereby increase the power of the operation as a whole. He also implicitly recognized that such operations would become more and more common; when Special Forces target the Baathists, he said, "it's technically not assassination—it's normal combat operations." ♦
http://www.newyorker.com/archive/2003/12/15/031215fa_fact?printable=true.

US contractor recruits guards for Iraq in Chile

Forces say experienced soldiers are quitting for private companies which pay more for similar work

Jonathan Franklin in Santiago
Friday March 5, 2004
The Guardian



The US is hiring mercenaries in Chile to replace its soldiers on security duty in Iraq. A Pentagon contractor has begun recruiting former commandos, other soldiers and seamen, paying them up to $4,000 (£2,193) a month to guard oil wells against attack by insurgents.

Last month Blackwater USA flew a first group of about 60 former commandos, many of who had trained under the military government of Augusto Pinochet, from Santiago to a 2,400-acre (970-hectare) training camp in North Carolina.

From there they will be taken to Iraq, where they are expected to stay between six months and a year, the president of Blackwater USA, Gary Jackson, told the Guardian by telephone.

"We scour the ends of the earth to find professionals - the Chilean commandos are very, very professional and they fit within the Blackwater system," he said.

Chile was the only Latin American country where his firm had hired commandos for Iraq. He estimated that "about 95%" of his work came from government contracts and said his business was booming.

"We have grown 300% over each of the past three years and we are small compared to the big ones.

"We have a very small niche market, we work towards putting out the cream of the crop, the best." The privatisation of security in Iraq is growing as the US seeks to reduce its commitment of troops. At the end of last year there were 10,000 hired security personnel in Iraq.

Recruitment in Chile began six months ago and brought immediate criticism from MPs and officers, who fear that it will encourage serving personnel to leave.



Michelle Bachelet, the defence minister, ordered an investigation into whether paramilitary training by Blackwater violated Chilean laws on the use of weapons by private citizens.

She asked for its recruiting effort to be investigated after it was alleged that people on active duty were involved.

Many soldiers are said to be leaving the army to join the private companies.
Mr Jackson said that similar issues were bedevilling the US forces.

The private sector paid experienced special forces personnel far more than the armed services.

"The US military has the same problems," he said. "If they are going to outsource tasks that were once held by active-duty military and are now using private contractors, those guys [on active duty] are looking and asking, 'Where is the money?'"

The number of hired soldiers in Iraq is estimated to be in the thousands.
Squads of Bosnians, Filipinos and Americans with special forces experience have been hired for tasks ranging from airport security to protecting Paul Bremer, the head of the Coalition Provisional Authority.

Their salaries can be as high as $1,000 a day, the news agency AFP recently reported. Erwin, a 28-year-old former US army sergeant working in Iraq, told AFP: "This place is a goldmine. All you need is five years in the military and you come here and make a good bundle."

Responding to a fear that any of its recruits who might suffer traumatic battlefield stress might be simply dumped back into Chilean society without mental health schemes, Mr Jackson said Blackwater USA had extensive psychological counselling programmes.

"We have clinical psychologists on staff and we do a battery of tests during the assessment phase. "I personally come from a special operations background and I feel comfortable that we have the procedures in place that will allow them to handle the stress.

"We didn't just come down and say, 'You and you and you, come work for us.' They were all vetted in Chile and all of them have military backgrounds. This is not the Boy Scouts."

In an interview with the Chilean newspaper La Tercera, a former Chilean army officer, Carlos Wamgnet, 30, who was going to Iraq, said: "We are calm. This mission is nothing new for us.

"In the end, this is an extension of our military career."

John Rivas, 27, a former Chilean marine, said the work in Iraq would provide a "very good income" that would allow him to support his family.

"I don't feel like a mercenary," he added.

http://www.guardian.co.uk/international/story/0,3604,1162392,00.html

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Ambassador to Death Squads.
Who is John Negroponte?
By GHALI HASSAN June 4, 2004



The White House has appointed Mr. John Dimitris Negroponte to be United States ambassador to Iraq. He will preside over the largest embassy in the world, and housed in the Republic Palace (misleadingly named Saddam's Palace by the U.S. occupation). He will be protected by high concrete walls, barbed wires and more than 150,000 occupation force, including several thousands of foreign mercenaries

armed to the teeth with the most violent tools. Mr. Negroponte is Greek-American diplomat. He is currently leading the diplomatic war against the people of Iraq as the U.S. envoy at the United Nations (UN) in New York. Negroponte is Jewish. A friend in Spain expressed his deep concern to me recently: " to appoint a Jew as ambassador to the Arab country that has been devastated because of the will of a cabal of Jewish neocons headed by Wolfowitz Bush is just an accessory -, is like trying to put off a fire using buckets of gasoline".

Mr. Negroponte has served as U.S. Ambassador to Honduras from 1981-1985; a period during which the U.S. military aid to Honduras grew from $5 million to nearly $100 million, and more than $200 million in economic aid, making Honduras the largest aid recipient in the region. Honduras was the launching pad from which the Reagan administration runs its violent "war on terror" in Central American. The U.S-backed atrocities and terror were condemned by the International World Court in the Hague (1). Like most of his colleagues in the Bush administration, Mr. Negroponte is a "recycled reaganites".

At the time Mr. Negroponte was in Honduras, Honduras was a military dictatorship. Kidnapping, rape, torture and executions of dissidents was rampant. The military top and middle ranks were U.S-trained at the School of the Americas (SOA), the Harvard version of the CIA, based in Fort Benning, Georgia. According to Human Rights Watch, graduates of the SOA are responsible for the worst human rights abuses and torture of dissidents in Latin America. Some of its 60,000 graduates are notorious Manuel Noriega and Omar Torrijos of Panama, Leopoldo Galtieri and Roberto Viola of Argentina, Juan Velasco Alvarado of Peru, Guillermo Rodriguez of Ecuador, Hugo Banzer Suarez of Bolivia and Gustavo Álvarez Martínez, Honduras security police chief and later Honduran top military commander.

In Honduras the army intelligence unit, Battalion 3-16, which was involved in kidnappings, rape, torture and killing of suspected dissidents. In 1995 Gary Cohn and Ginger Thompson of *The Baltimore Sun* unearthed massive and substantiated evidence from various sources pointing the finger at Mr. Negroponte knowledge of the crimes. The reporters also found that hundreds of Hondurans "were kidnapped, tortured and killed in the 1980s by a secret army unit trained and supported by the CIA"(2). Reliable evidence from the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights in Honduras alleged that Negroponte oversaw the expansion of U.S training camp and military base on Honduran territory, where US-trained Contras terrorists, and where the military secretly detained, tortured and executed Honduran suspected dissidents.



During his years in Honduras, Negroponte acquired a reputation, justified, as an old-fashioned imperialist, and devoted to Realpolitik (3). Mr. Negroponte will bring to Iraq his version of "democracy" à la Latin America, where the people vote for one of two candidates every half decade, in which civilian leaders have to obey U.S-controlled militaries or face dismissal by military force. Mr. Negroponte will find the Iraqi soil fertile for his version of democracy and human rights. The U.S. administration turn blind eye to violations of human rights by their own troops and mercenaries. Nazi's methods of torture, sexual abuses and murder of Iraqi prisoners by the racist soldiers of the occupying forces are in use immediately after the invasion and occupation of the Iraq.

The occupying powers also ignores the criminal activities of four militia thugs, which according to exile Iraqis have murdered many Iraqi academics and intellectuals. The Iraqi-born novelist and artist Haifa Zangana wrote in the Guardian of London: "the peshmergas of the two Kurdish parties; the Badr brigade of the Supreme Council for Islamic Revolution in Iraq; Ahmed Chalabi's troops; and the ex-Ba'athist Mukhabarats under Iyad Alawi's national accord. These militias are run by members of the IGC and no one can touch them"(4). The occupying powers have not put an end to these violent crimes.



Recently, Mr. Negroponte talked about: "real dialogue between our military commanders, the new Iraqi government and, I think, the United States mission as well". He said: "the American military is going to have the freedom to act in their self-defence, and they are going to be free to operate in Iraq as they best see fit". Negroponte stint at the UN was to shield Israel crimes against the Palestinians, and to coerce smaller nations at the Security Council exercising the threat of U.S. power.

Negroponte diplomatic responsibilities were appalling. Democracy and human rights are not on Negroponte preferred menu. Negroponte will be serving the interests of U.S. tyranny and U.S. Corporations in Iraq. Negroponte will bring to Iraq the economic disasters inflicted on the people of Latin America by the U.S. and U.S-backed corporations. Negroponte is not suitable to serve in the current political environment of Iraq.

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[2]. Gary Cohn & Ginger Thompson, Former envoy to Honduras says he did what he could, *The Baltimore Sun*, December 15, 1995.
[3]. Stephen Kinzer, Our Man in Honduras, *The New York Review of Books*, 48(14), September 2001.
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http://www.counterpunch.org/hassan06042004.html



AlterNet
The Mix is the Message

Here Come the Death Squad Veterans
By Louis Nevaer, Pacific News Service
Posted on June 16, 2004.
http://www.alternet.org/story/18967/

If JosÃ© Miguel Pizarro has his way, he will recruit 30,000 Chileans as mercenaries to protect American companies under Pentagon contract to rebuild Iraq. And undoubtedly, within those ranks

will be former members of death squads that tortured and murdered civilians when dictatorships ruled in Latin America.

"There is no comparison with what they can earn in the active military or working in civilian jobs, and what we offer," José Miguel Pizarro, Chile's leading recruiter for international security firms, says. "This is an opportunity that few in Chile can afford to pass up."



Pizarro's firm, Servicios Integrales, was contracted by Blackwater USA to recruit the first batch of Chileans in November 2003. By May 2004 he had placed 5,200 men who, after one week of training in Santiago, head to North Carolina for orientation with Blackwater, the private security firm that made headlines when four of its employees where killed in Falluja, their bodies mutilated and hung from a bridge. After training, Blackwater flies the men to Kuwait City to await their assignments in Iraq.

As democratic governments were voted into office throughout Latin America in the 1990s, Latin militaries were downsized. Thousands of military officers lost their jobs. "This is a way of continuing our military careers," Carlos Wamgnet, 30, explained in a phone interview from Kuwait while awaiting his assignment in Iraq. "In civilian life in Chile I was making $1,800 a month. Here I can earn a year's pay in six weeks. It's worth the risks."

At 30, Wamgnet is too young to have participated in any crime of the Pinochet regime. But not all the Chileans in Iraq are guiltless. Newspapers in Chile have estimated that approximately 37 Chileans in Iraq are seasoned veterans of the Pinochet era. Government officials in Santiago are alarmed that men who enjoy amnesty in Chile -- provided they remain in "retirement" from their past military activities -- are now in Iraq.

In an interview with the Santiago-based daily newspaper La Tercera, Chilean Minister of Defense Dr. Michelle Bachelet stated that Chilean "mercenaries for American firms doing business in Iraq" may be subject to "arrest or detention in third countries," a reference to recent arrests in Spain and Mexico of South Americans with war-crimes pasts. South American media report that Chileans have requested travel from Chile to the United States and then directly to the Middle East, to bypass Mexico and the European Union. The thousands of Chileans in Iraq have been nicknamed "the penguins" by American

and South African soldiers for hire, a reference both to Chile's proximity to the South Pole and the fact that many Chilean mercenaries are of mixed race.



Not everyone in Chile is opposed to the presence in Iraq of former Chilean army members. "It is true that the majority [of Chilean recruits] see this as an opportunity to earn money," La Tercera columnist Mauricio Aguirre wrote."But it is also an opportunity for our soldiers to prove themselves on the ground, and to put to use the skills for which they trained in the Armed Forces over the years."
"Blackwater USA has sent recruiters to Chile, Peru, Argentina, Colombia and Guatemala for one specific reason alone," said an intelligence officer in Kuwait who requested anonymity. "All these countries experienced dirty wars and they have military men well-trained in dealing with internal subversives. They are well-versed in extracting confessions from prisoners."

As the security situation in Iraq deteriorated in the spring of 2004, more "dedicated recruiting" began. Though Chile is in vigorous debate about the role of military servicemen becoming hired guns in Iraq, in Argentina there is virtual silence. Several Argentine mercenaries have made their way to the United States to meet with American security firms before heading to Iraq. "No one wants to discuss what is becoming clear," says Mario PodestÃi, 51, an independent Argentine journalist. "I know of seven military officers responsible for disappearing opponents of the dictatorship" who are now in Iraq. During Argentina's "dirty wars," opponents of the military regime were "disappeared" (abducted), tortured and then killed.



Podesta spoke to this reporter in early April. He was in Jordan preparing to travel by road to Baghdad, along with Mariana VerÃ³nica Cabrera, 28, an Argentine camerawoman. "I want to find these men," he said of the Argentine 'dirty war' criminals he had identified as being mercenaries in Iraq. It was not to be.

PodestÃi and Cabrera were killed, along with their Iraqi driver, in an automobile accident before reaching Baghdad.

Louis Nevaer is an author and economist whose most recent book, "NAFTA'S Second Decade" (South-Western Educational Publishing, 2004), examines the political economy of international development and trade.

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May 1, 2005

The Way of the Commandos

By PETER MAASS

Getting to Know the General

n a country of tough guys, Adnan Thabit may be the toughest of all. He was both a general and a death-row prisoner under Saddam Hussein. He favors leather jackets no matter the weather, his left index finger extends only to the knuckle (the rest was sliced off in combat) and he responds to requests from supplicants with grunts that mean "yes" or "no." Occasionally, a humble aide approaches to spray perfume on his hands, which he wipes over his rugged face.

General Adnan, as he is known, is the leader of Iraq's most fearsome counterinsurgency force. It is called the Special Police Commandos and consists of about 5,000 troops. They have fought the insurgents in Mosul, Ramadi, Baghdad and Samarra. It was in Samarra, 60 miles north of Baghdad in the heart of the Sunni Triangle, where, in early March, I spent a week with Adnan, himself a Sunni, and two battalions of his commandos. Samarra is Adnan's hometown, and he had come to retake it. As the offensive to drive out the insurgents got under way, the only area securely under Adnan's control was a barricaded enclave around the town hall, where he grimly presided over matters of war and peace, but mostly war, chain-smoking Royal cigarettes at a raised desk in the mayor's office. With a jowly face set in a permanent scowl, Adnan is perfectly suited to the grim realities of Iraq, and he knows it. When an admiring American colonel compared him to Marlon Brando in "The Godfather," Adnan took it as a compliment and smiled.

Early one evening, I was sitting in his office when an officer entered with a click of his heels -- an Iraqi salute of sorts. He reported to Adnan that a rebel weapons cache had been discovered, and Adnan congratulated him -- but issued a warning. "If even one AK-47 is stolen," he said, "I will kill you." After a pause, he smiled and refined the threat. "No," he said, "I will kill your" -- and he used a coarse word that referred to the officer's most private body part. There was nervous laughter. Everyone seemed certain that not a single gun, or single anything, would go missing.

Not long ago, hard men like Adnan, especially Sunnis, were giving orders to no one. Six weeks after the fall of Baghdad, the Coalition Provisional Authority dismissed the Sunni-led Iraqi Army, and the United States military set out to rebuild Iraq's armed forces from the ground up, training new officers and soldiers rather than calling on those who knew how to fight but had done so in the service of Saddam Hussein. By late last year, though, it had become clear that the new American-trained forces were not shaping up as an effective fighting force, and the old guard was called upon. Now people like

Adnan, a former Baathist, have been given the task of defeating the insurgency. The new strategy is showing signs of success, but it is a success that may carry its own costs.

A couple of hours after Adnan issued his AK-47 threat, I sat with him watching TV. This was business, not pleasure. The program we were watching was Adnan's brainchild, and in just a few months it had proved to be one of the most effective psychological operations of the war. It is reality TV of sorts, a show called "Terrorism in the Grip of Justice." It features detainees confessing to various crimes. The show was first broadcast earlier this year and has quickly become a nationwide hit. It is on every day in prime time on Al Iraqiya, the American-financed national TV station, and when it is on, people across the country can be found gathered around their television sets.

Those being interrogated on the program do not look fearsome; these are not the faces to be found in the propaganda videos that turn up on Web sites or on Al Jazeera. The insurgents, or suspected insurgents, on "Terrorism in the Grip of Justice" come off as cowardly lowlifes who kill for money rather than patriotism or Allah. They tremble on camera, stumble over their words and look at the ground as they confess to everything from contract murders to sodomy. The program's clear message is that there is now a force more powerful than the insurgency: the Iraqi government, and in particular the commandos, whose regimental flag, which shows a lion's head on a camouflage background, is frequently displayed on a banner behind the captives.

Before the show began that evening, Adnan's office was a hive of conversation, phone calls and tea-drinking. Along with a dozen commandos, there were several American advisers in the room, including James Steele, one of the United States military's top experts on counterinsurgency. Steele honed his tactics leading a Special Forces mission in El Salvador during that country's brutal civil war in the 1980's. Steele's presence was a sign not only of the commandos' crucial role in the American counterinsurgency strategy but also of his close relationship with Adnan. Steele admired the general. "He's obviously a natural type of commander," Steele told me. "He commands respect."

Things quieted in the office once the episode of "Terrorism in the Grip of Justice" began. First, a detainee admitted to having homosexual relations in a mosque. Then several other suspected insurgents made their confessions; two of them had been captured by Adnan's commandos in Samarra, and their confessions were taped, just hours before, in this very office. Adnan sat smoking Royals and watching the show like a proud producer.

"It has a good effect on civilians," he had told me, through an interpreter. "Most civilians don't know who conducts the terrorist activities. Now they can see the quality of the insurgents." Earlier he said: "Civilians must know that these people who call themselves resisters are thieves and looters. They are dirty. In every person there is good and bad, but in these people there is only bad."

The episodes of the program I have seen depict an insurgency composed almost entirely of criminals and religious fanatics. The insurgency as understood by American intelligence officers, is a more complex web of interests and fighters. Most of the insurgency is composed of Sunnis, and it is generally believed that Baathists hold key positions. But the commandos, who are the stars of "Terrorism in the Grip of Justice," are also led by Sunnis and have many former Baathists in their ranks, so the Sunni and Baathist aspect of the insurgency is carefully obscured.

Of course, propaganda need not be wholly accurate to be effective. The real problem with the program, according to its most vocal critics -- representatives of human rights groups -- is that it violates the Geneva Conventions. The detainees shown on "Terrorism in the Grip of Justice" have not been charged before judicial authorities, and they appear to be confessing under duress. Some detainees are cut and bruised. In one show, a former policeman with two black eyes confessed to killing two police officers in Samarra; a few days after the broadcast, the former policeman's family told reporters, his corpse was delivered to them. The government's human rights minister has initiated an investigation.

"Terrorism in the Grip of Justice" is a ratings success because it humiliates the insurgency, satisfying a popular desire for vengeance against the men who spread terror and death. Yet the program plyas rough not only with its confessing captives but also with the rules and laws that govern the conduct of war. As I learned in Samarra, this approach was not just for television. It was Adnan's effective yet brutal way of conducting a counterinsurgency.

Building a Home-Grown Counterinsurgency

Most of the Pentagon's official statements in the past two years about the ability of Iraqis to police their own country have been exaggerated. But now reality is beginning to catch up with rhetoric. In the months that followed the January elections in Iraq, attacks on allied forces reportedly fell to 30 to 40 a day in February and March, from 140 just before the vote. It's hard to tell whether this trend will continue; in late April the insurgency showed signs of renewed strength. But the successes that the counterinsurgency has enjoyed are in no small part because of Adnan's commandos. With American forces in an advisory role, the commandos, as well as a few other well-led units, like the Iraqi Army's 36th Commando Battalion and its 40th Brigade in Baghdad, inflicted more violence upon insurgents than insurgents inflicted upon them. That is much of what fighting an insurgency amounts to. But successful counterinsurgencies, if history is a guide, tend not to be pretty, especially in countries where violence has been a way of life and rules governing warfare and human rights have been routinely ignored by those in uniform.

The template for Iraq today is not Vietnam, to which it has often been compared, but El Salvador, where a right-wing government backed by the United States fought a leftist insurgency in a 12-year war beginning in 1980. The cost was high -- more than 70,000 people were killed, most of them civilians,

in a country with a population of just six million. Most of the killing and torturing was done by the army and the right-wing death squads affiliated with it. According to an Amnesty International report in 2001, violations committed by the army and its associated paramilitaries included "extrajudicial executions, other unlawful killings, 'disappearances' and torture. . . . Whole villages were targeted by the armed forces and their inhabitants massacred." As part of President Reagan's policy of supporting anti-Communist forces, hundreds of millions of dollars in United States aid was funneled to the Salvadoran Army, and a team of 55 Special Forces advisers, led for several years by Jim Steele, trained front-line battalions that were accused of significant human rights abuses.

There are far more Americans in Iraq today -- some 140,000 troops in all -- than there were in El Salvador, but U.S. soldiers and officers are increasingly moving to a Salvador-style advisory role. In the process, they are backing up local forces that, like the military in El Salvador, do not shy away from violence. It is no coincidence that this new strategy is most visible in a paramilitary unit that has Steele as its main adviser; having been a key participant in the Salvador conflict, Steele knows how to organize a counterinsurgency campaign that is led by local forces. He is not the only American in Iraq with such experience: the senior U.S. adviser in the Ministry of Interior, which has operational control over the commandos, is Steve Casteel, a former top official in the Drug Enforcement Administration who spent much of his professional life immersed in the drug wars of Latin America. Casteel worked alongside local forces in Peru, Bolivia and Colombia, where he was involved in the hunt for Pablo Escobar, the head of the Medellin cocaine cartel.

Both Steele and Casteel were adamant in discussions with me that they oppose human rights abuses. They stressed that torture and death-squad activity are counterproductive. Yet excesses of that sort were endemic in Latin America and in virtually every modern counterinsurgency. American abuses at Abu Ghraib and other detention centers in Iraq and Afghanistan show that first-world armies are not immune to the seductions of torture.

Until last year, the United States military tried to defeat the insurgency on its own, with Iraqi forces playing only a token role. The effort did not succeed. For every Iraqi detained by G.I.'s, 10 more seemed to join the insurgency, thanks to questionable American tactics: shooting at the whiff of a threat, yelling at civilians, detaining Iraqis indiscriminately, placing hoods over the heads of detainees. With insurgent attacks becoming more frequent and also more gruesome in the spring of 2004, American generals realized that they needed to create, or find, effective Iraqi forces.

Last June, Lt. Gen. David Petraeus, who commanded the 101st Airborne during the invasion, returned to Iraq to take charge of the sputtering training effort. He arrived in the wake of a major embarrassment -- when the first U.S.-trained battalion of Iraqi troops was ordered to Falluja to support an offensive by the Marines, many of them deserted or refused to fight. General Petraeus was given the resources and clout to turn things around, but in the months that followed things did not

appear to be improving. When insurgents attacked the northern city of Mosul in the fall, the U.S.-trained police force there collapsed, abandoning its stations. Across the country, police officers were being killed by the dozens in mortar and car-bomb attacks; demoralized and outgunned, they retreated to fortified stations or simply stayed home.

A scathing report from the Center for Strategic and International Studies, still in draft form but posted on the center's Web site, blames senior American officials for these failures of Iraqi will. "The police and the bulk of the security forces were given grossly inadequate training, equipment, facilities, transport and protection," states the report, written by Anthony Cordesman, a military expert and former Pentagon official. "These problems were then compounded by recruiting U.S. police advisers -- some more for U.S. domestic political reasons than out of any competence for the job -- with no area expertise and little or no real knowledge of the mission that the Iraqi security and police forces actually had to perform." The report seems to be referring to, among others, Bernard Kerik, the former New York City police commissioner, who was the first police adviser to L Paul Bremer III, administrator of the Coalition Provisional Authority. Kerik left after three and a half months. Although the report notes some progress in recent months, it concludes: "Unprepared Iraqis were sent out to die. . . . The fact that some died as a result of U.S. incompetence and neglect was the equivalent of bureaucratic murder."

A key problem early on was that United States officials focused on the number of recruits rather than on their quality. Not only was the wrong metric being used to measure progress; the metric was being manipulated. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, at her confirmation hearing in January, stated that 120,000 Iraqis were trained and equipped. Senator Joseph Biden countered that no more than 14,000 of them were reliable fighters. Biden had a point: many of the Iraqis in Rice's head count barely knew how to fire a weapon. A recent report from the Government Accountability Office said the Pentagon's tallies have included tens of thousands of police officers who did not even report for duty. "If you are reporting AWOL's in your numbers, I think there's some inaccuracy in your reporting," Joseph Christoff, the G.A.O. official who presented the report to Congress, commented to The Los Angeles Times.

Last summer, with the security situation deteriorating, some Iraqi and American officials began to argue that the time had passed for a "clean hands" policy that rejected most of the experienced people who had fought for Saddam Hussein. The first official to take action was Falah al-Naqib, interior minister under the interim government of Ayad Allawi. In September, Naqib formed his own regiment, the Special Police Commandos, drawn from veterans of Hussein's special forces and the Republican Guard. As its leader, he chose General Adnan, not only because Adnan had a useful collection of colleagues from Iraq's military and security networks, but also because Adnan is Naqib's uncle.

Naqib did not ask for permission or training or even equipment from the United States military; he formed and armed the commandos because the U.S. military would not. "One of the biggest mistakes made by the coalition forces is that they started from zero," he told me in his office in the Green Zone in Baghdad. "Our army and police are 80 years old. They have lots of experience. They know more about the country and the people, and about the way the insurgents are fighting, than any foreign forces."

Initially, Petraeus wasn't even told of the commandos; Iraqis and American civilians at the Ministry of Interior had lost faith in the U.S. military. The American who was most involved in the commandos' creation was Casteel, Naqib's senior American adviser. Casteel, who previously worked for Paul Bremer in the Coalition Provisional Authority, realized that the de-Baathification policy had to be altered and that Naqib was the person to do it. "He was not looking for top Baathists or people with blood on their hands," Casteel said. "But a tremendous amount of people who worked in the government or army weren't either of those. So why start from scratch when we can start in the middle? That's where the commando idea was formed."

After the commandos set up their headquarters at a bombed-out army base at the edge of the Green Zone, Petraeus went for a visit. He was pleasantly surprised, he told me, to see a force that was relatively disciplined and well motivated. He knew the commandos were officers and soldiers who had served Saddam Hussein, he knew many of them were Sunni and he certainly knew they were not under American control. But he also sensed that they could fight. He challenged some of them to a push-up contest. He was not just embracing a new military formation; he was embracing a new strategy. The hard men of the past would help shape the country's future.

Petraeus decided that the commandos would receive whatever arms, ammunition and supplies they required. He also assigned Steele to work with them. In addition to his experience in El Salvador, Steele had been in charge of retraining Panama's security forces following the ousting of President Manuel Noriega. When I asked him to describe Adnan's leadership qualities, Steele drew on the vocabulary he learned in Latin America. Adnan, he said approvingly, was a *caudillo* -- a military strongman.

Doing It the Iraqi Way

Adnan's offensive turned Samarra into a proving ground for this new strategy, the most comprehensive effort to date in which United States-backed Iraqi forces sought to retake an insurgent city. Code-named City Market, the offensive has involved weeks of raids by commandos and their American advisers. After the first wave of raids, a new corps of police officers and Interior Ministry troops known as Public Order Battalions were deployed to take command of the streets.

Samarra has a population of a quarter million, though many have fled after two years of warfare. The population is divided among seven tribes whose rivalries created fertile soil for the insurgency to take root. Since 2003, the city has often been under the control of the insurgents. In October, the United States launched an offensive to retake the city, but the moment the Bradleys and Humvees departed, the insurgents returned. (Voter turnout in the election in January was less than 5 percent.)

When I arrived in March, the part of Samarra under American and commando control -- the City Hall and a Green Zone around it -- was a small parcel of land ringed with a phalanx of concrete barriers, barbed wire and shoot-to-kill lookouts. The main roads into the city were blocked by checkpoints at which Iraqi soldiers searched every vehicle. American and Iraqi forces rarely left the Green Zone on foot, conducting their patrols in heavily armed convoys, and the Green Zone was hit by mortars almost every day.

There were just a few hundred G.I.'s in Samarra, living in the Green Zone on two bases, Razor and Olsen. The conditions were spartan; soldiers were housed in cramped rooms, they used portable toilets as latrines and hot dinners were served just three nights a week. At Olsen, a former casino that is home to troops of the Wisconsin Army National Guard and the Third Infantry Division, the soldiers I met spent most of their off-hours lifting weights, e-mailing loved ones back home or playing Halo on Xboxes, unwinding from real combat by engaging in simulated combat. Three teams of a dozen or so G.I.'s went out on the raids with the Iraqi commandos. (The other soldiers in the city performed logistical, administrative and perimeter-security duties.) One team was composed of Special Forces soldiers, another was drawn from the Wisconsin National Guard and the third, with which I spent most of my time on patrol, was staffed by soldiers of the Third Infantry Division. The squad leader was Capt. Jeff Bennett, a 26-year-old whose father is in the Air Force.

Captain Bennett was on his second tour in Iraq. During the invasion, he was among the Third Infantry Division troops who captured Baghdad airport against stiff resistance from Republican Guard forces. Bennett wears his division patch on the shoulder of his uniform, and soon after he arrived in Samarra, the patch was recognized by a few of the Iraqi commandos, who informed him that they had been in the Republican Guard unit at the airport that fought his unit. Initially, Bennett was leery about going into combat with men he had tried to kill, and who had tried to kill him, but after their first battle together, fighting shoulder to shoulder against insurgents, his doubts disappeared.

"That's the great equalizer," Bennett said. "You get into a firefight with someone, they come to your side, return fire, cover another person. That kind of seals the relationship."

Many of the commando raids occurred at night. One evening, I watched as preparations began on the street outside City Hall. A group of about 50 Iraqis strapped on their body armor, inserted bullet clips into their AK-47's and listened to heavy metal on the stereos of their American-supplied Dodge

pickups, which now bore coats of camouflage paint and machine guns on their flatbeds. The commandos talked and joked loudly, exuding an alpha-male confidence. Bennett's squad mixed easily with the commandos, exchanging greetings in the Arabic phrases they learned.

The commandos cultivate a vaguely menacing look. They wear camouflage uniforms, but also irregular clothing, like black leather gloves and balaclavas -- not to hide their identities but to inspire fear among the enemy. It is a look I saw among the Serbian paramilitaries who terrorized Croatia and Bosnia during the Balkan wars in the 90's, and it is the look of the paramilitaries that operated in Latin America a decade earlier.

When it was time to go, the commandos moved out in their Dodges, and Bennett's team followed in three armored Humvees. Bennett was not sure of the precise destination that evening; though the Iraqis and Americans had swapped lists of high-value targets, the commandos generally decided which ones would be pursued. The patrol moved out with lights off, slipping through Samarra's barren streets; there was a curfew in effect, and even the city's many stray dogs seemed to have taken shelter. The patrol eventually pulled to a halt at a house a few miles from the Green Zone. A man there, apparently willing to cooperate, said he knew where a number of insurgents could be found, and he led the way to a nearby house. Those inside were brought out, one by one. The man identified one as an insurgent, and he was flex-cuffed, blindfolded and thrown into the back of a truck.

The convoy moved on and made many more stops. House after house was searched. Sometimes the commandos broke down doors or shot off locks. Other times they entered with a polite knock and had friendly discussions, departing with handshakes and smiles. The commandos are far more skilled than American troops I've spent time with at knowing, intuitively, whether someone represents a threat. A few men were detained as the evening unfolded, and when they offered resistance or didn't provide information as quickly as the commandos desired, they were punished with a quick kick, slap or punch.

A little after 2 a.m., the commandos rolled into a neighborhood where the homes were surrounded by walls and had satellite dishes on their roofs. A man who was detained earlier in the night pointed the commandos toward one house. They entered and soon emerged with a confiscated computer, but whomever they hoped to find inside was not there.

The officer in charge of the raid -- a Major Falah -- now made it clear that he believed the detainee had led them on a wild-goose chase. The detainee was sitting at the side of a commando truck; I was 10 feet away, beside Bennett and four G.I.'s. One of Falah's captains began beating the detainee. Instead of a quick hit or slap, we now saw and heard a sustained series of blows. We heard the sound of the captain's fists and boots on the detainee's body, and we heard the detainee's pained grunts as he received his punishment without resistance. It was a dockyard mugging. Bennett turned his back to

face away from the violence, joining his soldiers in staring uncomfortably at the ground in silence. The blows continued for a minute or so.

Bennett had seen the likes of this before, and he had worked out his own guidelines for dealing with such situations. "If I think they're going to shoot somebody or cut his finger off or do any sort of permanent damage, I will immediately stop them," he explained. "As Americans, we will not let that happen. In terms of kicking a guy, they do that all the time, punches and stuff like that." It was a tactical decision, Bennett explained: "You only get so many interventions, and I've got to save my butting in for when there is a danger it could go over the line." But even when he doesn't say anything, he explained, "they can tell we're not enjoying it. We're just kind of like, 'O.K., here we go again.'"

Though the commandos and their American advisers were working together in Samarra, their approaches were decidedly different. The American way of combat is heavily planned, with satellite maps, G.P.S. coordinates and reconnaissance drones. The Iraqi way is improvisational, relying less on honed skills and high-tech than gut instinct and (literally) bare knuckles. It is the Americans who are learning to adapt. At the bottom of printed briefings that American soldiers receive at the bases in Samarra, a quotation from T.E. Lawrence is appended: "Better the Arabs do it tolerably than that you do it perfectly. It is their war, and you are to help them, not to win it for them."

Threatening to Kill a Suspect's Son

On March 8, I went on a series of raids with the commandos, traveling in a Humvee with Maj. Robert Rooker, an artillery officer based in Tikrit who was dispatched to Samarra to serve as my escort. The leader of the American squad was Andrew Johansen, a 30-year-old lieutenant in the Wisconsin Army National Guard. The commandos led the way in a half-dozen Dodges, with Johansen's team following in three Humvees. The target was a house outside Samarra where Najim al-Takhi, thought to be the leader of an insurgent cell, was believed to be hiding.

The commandos reached an isolated farmhouse and detained al-Takhi's son, who looked to be in his early 20's. This was an excellent catch. The son of a suspect usually knows where the suspect is hiding; if not, he can be detained and used as a bargaining chip to persuade the father to surrender. With al-Takhi's son flex-cuffed in the back of one of the pickups, the commandos, excited, drove to another farmhouse less than a mile away. They believed that al-Takhi might be there, but a quick search yielded nothing. The leader of this raid was a short, chubby captain who was enthusiastic and, as I noticed on previous raids, effective at leading his men. (When I later asked his name, he refused to give it.) The captain was convinced that al-Takhi was nearby, but the son was telling him he didn't know where his father was. Was he lying?

The captain's methods were swift and extreme. He yelled at the son, who was wearing a loose tunic; in the tussle of the arrest the young man had lost one of his sandals. The captain pushed him against a mud wall and told everyone else to move away. Standing less than 10 feet from the young man, the captain aimed his AK-47 at him and clicked off the safety latch. He was threatening to kill him. I was close enough to catch some of the dialogue on my digital recorder.

"Where is your father?" the captain shouted. "Say where your father is!"

"He left early in the morning," the son responded, clearly in terror. "I told my father to divorce my mother, to not leave us in such a state."

The son asked for mercy. "I swear, if I knew where he is, I would for sure take you to him." He looked around. "Oh, God, what should I do?"

The captain was not persuaded.

"Just tell us where he is, and we will release you now," he shouted.

"I swear to you, though you did not ask me to make an oath, instead of enduring all these beatings I would tell you where he is if I knew."

Major Rooker was just a few feet from the angry captain. He moved closer and nudged the captain's AK-47 toward the ground.

"You are a professional soldier," Rooker told him. "You know and I know that you need to put the weapon down."

The captain scowled but ended the execution drama.

"O.K., guys," he shouted to his men, "let's ride back."

As the commandos pulled their prisoner away, Lieutenant Johansen conferred with Rooker. "They don't operate the way we do, that's for damn sure," Johansen said. "We have to be nice to people." Especially in the aftermath of Abu Ghraib, they both knew that threatening a prisoner with death, they both knew, was illegal under the Geneva Conventions.

"I think it was all an act to try and get him to talk," Rooker said. "But for a fraction of a second I didn't know that. I thought the guy was going to cap him."

The commandos moved about 100 yards away, where they interrogated the young man again, this time without an AK-47 in his face. With an execution no longer in the offing, Rooker decided to not further

irritate the captain. "They'll shake him down a little bit more," he said to the driver of his Humvee. "Stay back and let them do their job."

Later, I asked Johansen about what had happened.

"I'm about 99 percent sure it was intimidation to put fear into the guy," he told me. "I know they use different means of interrogation, but I didn't expect them to raise a weapon at a detainee. I don't think they know the value of human life Americans have. If they shoot somebody, I don't think they would have remorse, even if they killed someone who was innocent."

Inside the Detention Center

In Samarra, the commandos established a detention center at the public library, a hundred yards down the road from the City Hall. The library is a one-story rose-hued building surrounded by a five-foot wall. There is a Koranic inscription over its entrance: "In the name of Allah the most gracious and merciful, Oh, Lord, please fill me with knowledge."

These days, the knowledge sought under its roof comes not from hardback books but from blindfolded detainees. In guerrilla wars of recent decades, detention centers have played a notorious role. From Latin America to the Balkans and the Middle East, the worst abuse has taken place away from the eyes of bystanders or journalists. During my first few days in the city, I was told I could not visit the center; I was able only to observe, discreetly, as detainees were led into it at all hours. But one day Jim Steele asked whether I wanted to interview a Saudi youth who had been captured the previous day. I agreed, and he took me to the detention center.

We walked through the entrance gates of the center and stood, briefly, outside the main hall. Looking through the doors, I saw about 100 detainees squatting on the floor, hands bound behind their backs; most were blindfolded. To my right, outside the doors, a leather-jacketed security official was slapping and kicking a detainee who was sitting on the ground. We went to a room adjacent to the main hall, and as we walked in, a detainee was led out with fresh blood around his nose. The room had enough space for a couple of desks and chairs; one desk had bloodstains running down its side. The 20-year-old Saudi was led into the room and sat a few feet from me. He said he had been treated well and that a bandage on his head was a result of an injury he suffered in a car accident as he was being chased by Iraqi soldiers.

A few minutes after the interview started, a man began screaming in the main hall, drowning out the Saudi's voice. "Allah!" he shouted. "Allah! Allah!" It was not an ecstatic cry; it was chilling, like the screams of a madman, or of someone being driven mad. "Allah!" he yelled again and again. The shouts were too loud to ignore. Steele left the room to find out what was happening. When returned, the

shouts had ceased. But soon, through the window behind me, I could hear the sounds of someone vomiting, coming from an area where other detainees were being held, at the side of the building.

Earlier, I spoke briefly with an American counterintelligence soldier who works at the detention center. The soldier, who goes by the name Ken -- counterintelligence soldiers often use false names for security reasons -- said that he or another American soldier was present at 90 percent of the interrogations by the commandos and that he had seen no abuse. I didn't have an opportunity to ask him detailed questions, and I wondered, in light of the beatings that I had seen soldiers watch without intervening, what might constitute abuse during interrogation. I also wondered what might be happening when American intelligence soldiers weren't present.

The Saudi I interviewed seemed relieved to have been captured, because his service in the insurgency, he said, was a time of unhappy disillusion. He came to Iraq to die with Islamic heroes, he said, but instead was drafted into a cell composed of riffraff who stole cars and kidnapped for money and attacked American targets only occasionally. When I asked, through an interpreter, whether he had planned to be a suicide bomber, he looked aghast and said he would not do that because innocent civilians would be killed; he was willing to enter paradise by being shot but not by blowing himself up. He gladly gave me the names of the members of the cell. One was a Syrian who had been arrested with him.

That evening, as I was eating dinner in the mess hall at Olsen base, I overheard a G.I. saying that he had seen the Syrian at the detention center, hanging from the ceiling by his arms and legs like an animal being hauled back from a hunt. When I struck up a conversation with the soldier, he refused to say anything more. Later, I spoke with an Iraqi interpreter who works for the U.S. military and has access to the detention center; when I asked whether the Syrian, like the Saudi, was cooperating, the interpreter smiled and said, "Not yet, but he will."

One afternoon as I was standing near City Hall, I heard a gunshot from within or behind the detention center. In previous days, I saw or heard, on several occasions, accidental shots by commandos -- their weapons discipline was far from perfect -- so I assumed it was another negligent discharge. But within a minute or so, there was another shot from the same place -- inside or behind the detention center.

It was impossible to determine what was happening at the detention center, but there was certainly cause to worry. A State Department report released last month noted that Iraqi authorities have been accused of "arbitrary deprivation of life, torture, impunity, poor prison conditions -- particularly in pretrial detention facilities -- and arbitrary arrest and detention." A report by Human Rights Watch in January went further, claiming that "unlawful arrest, long-term incommunicado detention, torture and other ill treatment of detainees (including children) by Iraqi authorities have become routine and commonplace."

When I returned to the United States, I asked the American authorities in Samarra for a comment about potential human rights abuses at the detention center. They forwarded my e-mail message to a spokesperson for the Iraqi Interior Ministry, who wrote in reply: "The Ministry of Interior does not allow any human rights abuses of prisoners that are in the hands of Ministry of Interior Security Forces. . . . Reports of human rights violations are deeply investigated by the Ministry of Interior's Human Rights Department."

The Uses of Fear

In El Salvador, a subpar army fought an insurgency to a standoff that eventually led to a political solution. Kalev Sepp, who was a Special Forces adviser in El Salvador and is currently a professor at the Navy's Center on Terrorism and Irregular Warfare, said he believes that the handful of United States-trained Salvadoran strike battalions made the difference. "Those six battalions held back the guerrillas for years," he said in a recent phone interview. "The rest of the army was guarding bridges and power lines."

In Iraq, the insurgency does not fight everywhere; most attacks occur around Baghdad and in the Sunni Triangle. This allows a small and agile counterinsurgency force to play a disproportionately large role, and the commandos are precisely that kind of force. As a paramilitary unit, they are not slowed down by heavy weapons, and they do not engage in the attrition warfare of lumbering army regiments with thousands of troops and tanks and artillery pieces. Instead, they go wherever there is trouble, racing up and down the highways at 90 miles an hour in their Dodge trucks (so quickly, in fact, that Humvees cannot keep up with them). When Mosul erupted in November, with local police officers fleeing their stations as insurgents took control of the streets, several battalions of commandos sped to the city and restored order (or what passes for order in Iraq). When National Guard troops collapsed in Ramadi earlier this year, a battalion of commandos was rushed in. The commandos in Samarra will return to their base in Baghdad once their mission is completed -- or they will head to the next hot spot.

Intriguingly, a reputation for severity can accomplish as much as severity itself. One day a troublesome local leader, Sheik Taha, arrived for a meeting with Adnan at Samarra's Town Hall. Lt. Col. Mark Wald, who commands the Third Infantry Brigade in the city, told me that Taha supported the insurgency but was reconsidering his options now that Adnan had arrived with his commandos. I assumed that Adnan conveyed a message to the sheik that was not dissimilar to his warning to the commando who found an arms cache -- do as I say or you will lose a precious body part.

After the meeting, I asked Adnan whether the sheik had agreed to fall in line.

"It is not important whether he is with us or against us," he growled in response. "We are the authority. We are the government, and everybody must cooperate with us. He is beginning to cooperate with us."

Adnan's remarks were put into context for me by Wald, a graduate of the University of California at Berkeley. He pointed at the door behind which Adnan and Taha met. "This is what I consider an Iraqi solution," he said. "The beauty of an Iraqi solution is that they know how justice has been dealt with in the past years. They know what they are subject to. We are bound by laws. I think they are, too, but that doesn't mean a guy like Sheik Taha doesn't go in there fearing it's an eye for an eye, tooth for a tooth."

No End in Sight

Paramilitary forces have a tendency to become politicized. Whereas the mission of army troops is national -- they exist to defend against foreign threats -- paramilitaries are used for internal combat. In the Middle East and elsewhere, they often serve the interests of the regime or of whatever faction in the regime controls them. (It is no accident that the commandos are run out of the Interior Ministry and not the Defense Ministry.) In a country as riven as Iraq -- with Shiites, Sunnis, Kurds and Turkmen vying for power -- a paramilitary force that is controlled by one faction can be a potent weapon against others. That is why the commandos are a conundrum -- in the country's unstable military and political landscape, it is impossible to know where they are heading.

The commandos and their leaders insist that they are loyal to the government rather than to any political or religious group. "There is no Sunni or Shia," Adnan told me, meaning that he does not pay attention to the religious origins of his men or the insurgents they hunt. "Anyone who tries to stop Iraq from moving forward, I will fight them." Adnan's statement is predictable, but is it convincing? The commando chain of command is largely Sunni -- they were set up by a Sunni minister (Naqib) and are led by a Sunni general (Adnan). At this point, the commandos consist mainly of two brigades. The commander of one brigade is Rashid al-Halafi, who is Shiite but is regarded warily by other Shiites because he held senior intelligence posts under Saddam Hussein. The other brigade was founded by Gen. Muhammed Muther, a Sunni who commanded a tank regiment under Hussein.

Of course, the commandos are an effective fighting force precisely because of their Sunni background. Sunnis occupied the top positions in Hussein's security apparatus and are, as a result, the country's most experienced fighters. They are particularly well suited to fight in the Sunni Triangle -- they have deep ties there and can extract more intelligence than outsiders, which is what Shiites and Kurds are considered in Samarra, Baqubah, Falluja, Ramadi and other insurgent strongholds. The Iraqi government improves its ability to fight the insurgents by bringing veteran Sunni military men on board.

Their presence is useful politically, too: it makes it hard for the insurgency to claim that the government ignores Sunni interests. History has shown that the best way to end an insurgency is to bring insurgents or potential insurgents into the political system. The Salvadoran war ended with a 1991 peace accord between the government and the F.M.L.N., the rebel movement, which then grew into a legitimate political party. Similarly, the conflict in Northern Ireland came to an end with the 1998 Good Friday Agreement, which provided for power sharing with Sinn Fein, the political wing of the Irish Republican Army.

The true loyalties of the commandos remain unclear, however. It is difficult to generalize about the reasons ex-Republican Guard generals and soldiers who are Sunni have joined the commandos. Loyalty to the Shiite-dominated government is a possibility. A larger consideration among the rank and file is a good paycheck (by Iraqi standards). Captain Bennett said that their desire to once again earn a living in their old line of work -- fighting in a professional military and being paid to do it -- is more important than warm feelings for the government.

"For some, there's definitely a desire to make Iraq better, but for a lot of them, it's just the life they know," he said. "For most of them, the cause isn't really that important. They're more used to working in this role. This is what they know, this is all they know. I think they feel a lot better that their actions now are against genuine threats, as opposed to threats against the regime," meaning Hussein's government. "But I think for a lot of them, they couldn't fathom doing something different with their lives."

Whatever the motivations, the integration of the commandos into the security forces stanches one flow of experienced fighters into the insurgency. Some commandos, and perhaps many of them, might have gravitated to the other side if their unemployment endured. "It's human nature," said Casteel, the adviser to Naqib, the interior minister. "If you cannot feed your family, you will find a way to feed your family." Naqib, Casteel explained, sees the commandos "as a way to re-employ people who could be on the other side but have skills that can be used."

Yet their presence in the new security forces is not universally welcomed. Shiites and Kurds faced mass murder during Hussein's regime, and they are understandably concerned about giving a share of military power to Sunnis, especially those who served Hussein. They worry that a Sunni-led security force could be a Trojan horse for the return of oppression by Sunnis. Because Naqib chose Hussein-era military figures to lead the commandos, he made few friends among Shiites and Kurds in the interim government, and he is not expected to retain his portfolio in the government being formed by the new prime minister, Ibrahim Jafari, who is Shiite. As Haydar al-Abadi, an influential member of Jafari's Islamic Dawa Party, told The Wall Street Journal: "The Baathists believe they are back, and that they can behave as before. People are afraid again."

If Jafari purges former Baathists, the commandos may lose their leaders, including Adnan. That would almost certainly test their loyalties. Secretary of Defense Donald H. Rumsfeld, on a visit to Iraq in April, evoked those concerns, telling reporters, "It's important that the new government be attentive to the competence of the people in the ministries, and that they avoid unnecessary turbulence." In the worst case, a purge could prompt some commandos to join the insurgency or evolve into a Sunni militia beyond government control. Already, Iraq has a Kurdish militia, the 90,000-strong pesh merga, outside the control of the central government; there is also the Badr Brigade, the Iranian-trained wing of the Supreme Council for the Islamic Revolution in Iraq, which is Shiite; and there is the Mahdi Army, loyal to the Shiite militant Moktada al-Sadr. The last thing the country needs is another militia.

It is a fraught situation -- a country at war without a unified and competent national army. And despite the improved security forces and the reduction in attacks on coalition forces, it is hard to see an end to the war any time soon. Just as the right political developments can tame an insurgency, so too can the wrong developments give new life to it. Arriving at the correct calibration of military force and political compromise is an excruciatingly difficult process. Historically, insurgencies have tended to last for at least 5 to 10 years; the endgame tends to begin when one or both sides become exhausted, and that rarely occurs after only a year or two.

In El Salvador, Honduras, Peru, Turkey, Algeria and other crucibles of insurgency and counterinsurgency, the battles went on and on. They were, without exception, dirty wars.

Peter Maass, a contributing writer, is the author of "Love Thy Neighbor: A Story of War." He has reported extensively for the magazine from Iraq.

http://www.nytimes.com/2005/05/01/magazine/01ARMY.html?ei=5090&en=831a22b7e549a670&ex=1272686400&partner=rssuserland&emc=rss&pa

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Before the War, CIA Reportedly Trained a Team of Iraqis to Aid U.S.

By Dana Priest and Josh White
Washington Post Staff Writers
Wednesday, August 3, 2005; A12

Before the war in Iraq began, the CIA recruited and trained an Iraqi paramilitary group, code-named the Scorpions, to foment rebellion, conduct sabotage, and help CIA paramilitaries who entered Baghdad and other cities target buildings and individuals, according to three current and former intelligence officials with knowledge of the unit.

The CIA spent millions of dollars on the Scorpions, whose existence has not been previously disclosed, even giving them former Soviet Hind helicopters. But most of the unit's prewar missions -- spray-painting graffiti on walls; cutting electricity; "sowing confusion," as one said -- were delayed or canceled because of poor training or planning, said officials briefed on the unit. The speed of the invasion negated the need for most of their missions, others said.

After Baghdad fell, the CIA used the Scorpions to try to infiltrate the insurgency, to help out in interrogations, and, from time to time, to do "the dirty work," as one intelligence official put it.

In one case, members of the unit, wearing masks and carrying clubs and pipes, beat up an Iraqi general in the presence of CIA and military personnel, according to investigative documents reviewed by The Washington Post and according to several defense and intelligence officials.

Post inquiries about the case prompted the CIA to brief the House and Senate intelligence committees on the unit, said several members of Congress and two defense officials.

Rep. Peter Hoekstra (R-Mich.), chairman of the House intelligence committee, asked if he was satisfied with the information he received on the unit, said, "Yes -- if it existed." But he added: "We're not spending a lot of time going back and dissecting tactical programs."

CIA spokeswoman Jennifer Millerwise declined to comment on the unit. Defense Department spokesmen referred comments on the unit to the CIA. All former and current government officials interviewed spoke on the condition of anonymity, citing the classified nature of the Scorpions.

Authorized by a presidential finding signed by President Bush in February or March 2002, the Scorpions were part of a policy of "regime change" in Iraq. The covert members, many of whom were exiles recruited by the Kurds, were trained in target identification, explosives and small arms at two secret bases in Jordan, according to one U.S. government official.

They were sent surreptitiously into Iraq before the war and were in cities such as Baghdad, Fallujah and Qaim to give the impression that a rebellion was underway and to conduct light sabotage, according to the two defense sources and the three former and current intelligence officials.

"They painted X's [for targeting] on buildings and things like that," said one former intelligence officer.

After the initial combat phase of the war, the CIA used the paramilitary units as translators and to fetch supplies and retrieve informants in an increasingly dangerous Iraq where CIA officers largely stayed within the protected Green Zone, according to the officials.

CIA control over the unit became weaker as chaos grew in Iraq. "Even though they were set up by us, they weren't well supervised," said an intelligence official.

"At some point, and it's not really clear how this happened, they started being used in interrogations . . . because they spoke the local dialect" and were caught roughing up detainees, Curtis E. Ryan, an Army investigator, told a military court in Colorado where four soldiers are charged in connection with the death of Maj. Gen. Abed Hamed Mowhoush in 2003.

Many of the paramilitaries did not speak English. When they entered Iraq after the invasion, because they wore civilian clothes and traveled in civilian vehicles, the Scorpion teams were often mistaken for insurgents. On a couple of occasions, U.S. soldiers unknowingly tracked the teams as insurgents and focused on their official safe houses as possible targets until they were discovered to be working with U.S. officials.

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British-trained police in Iraq 'killed prisoners with drills'

By Francis Elliott, Raymond Whitaker and Kim Sengupta

Published: 20 November 2005



Britain has been dragged into the growing scandal of officially condoned killings in Iraq

British-trained police operating in Basra have tortured at least two civilians to death with electric drills, *The Independent on Sunday* can reveal.

John Reid, the Secretary of State for Defence, admits that he knows of "alleged deaths in custody" and other "serious prisoner abuse" at al-Jamiyat police station, which was reopened by Britain after the war.

Militia-dominated police, who were recruited by Britain, are believed to have tortured at least two men to death in the station. Their bodies were later found with drill holes to their arms, legs and skulls.

The victims were suspected of collaborating with coalition forces, according to intelligence reports. Despite being pressed "very hard" by Britain, however, the Iraqi authorities in Basra are failing to even investigate incidents of torture and murder by police, ministers admit.

The disclosure drags Britain firmly into the growing scandal of officially condoned killings, torture and disappearances in Iraq. More than 170 starving and tortured prisoners were discovered last week in an Interior Ministry bunker in Baghdad.


22nd Marine Expeditionary Unit / Helmiy al-Azawi

American troops who uncovered the secret torture chamber are also said to have discovered mutilated corpses, several bearing drill marks.

Adam Price, the Plaid Cymru MP for Carmarthen East and Dinefwr, who uncovered the death at al-Jamiyat police station, called for an immediate UN investigation into police torture. "The Government keeps on saying that respect for human rights is a pre-condition of withdrawal. Well, it should be a pre-condition for UK soldiers to continue risking their lives in Iraq," he said.

Mr Reid said: "I am aware of serious allegations of prisoner abuse at the Jamiyat, including two deaths in custody. We take this very seriously. We have been pressing the Iraqi authorities very hard to investigate these allegations thoroughly and then to take the appropriate action."



Ministry of Defence sources privately confirm that the two SAS soldiers seized and held in Jamiyat in September were investigating allegations of police torture prompted by the discovery of the bodies.

British forces in armoured vehicles smashed their way into the station to rescue them, but officers have admitted they are powerless to protect civilians in southern Iraq from militias, and military patrols have been withdrawn from central Basra in the wake of the September clashes.

In the US-controlled districts of Iraq, some senior military and intelligence officials have been accused of giving tacit approval to the

extra-judicial actions of counter-insurgency forces.

Critics claim the situation echoes American collaboration with military regimes in Latin America and south-east Asia during the Cold War, particularly in Vietnam, where US-trained paramilitaries were used to kill opponents of the South Vietnamese government.

http://news.independent.co.uk/world/middle_east/article328214.ece

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Death Mask: The Deliberate Disintegration of Iraq

Written by Chris Floyd Thursday, 01 December 2005

This is an extended version of a column appearing in the Dec. 2 edition of The Moscow Times.

The recent revelations about the virulent spread of death squads ravaging Iraq have only confirmed for many people the lethal incompetence of the Bush Regime, whose brutal bungling appears to have unleashed the demon of sectarian strife in the conquered land. The general reaction, even among some war supporters, has been bitter derision: "Jeez, these bozos couldn't boil an egg without causing collateral damage."

But what if the truth is even more sinister? What if this murderous chaos is not the fruit of rank incompetence but instead the desired product of carefully crafted, efficiently managed White House policy?

Investigative journalist Max Fuller marshals a convincing case for this dread conclusion in a remarkable work of synthesis drawn from information buried in reams of mainstream news stories and public Pentagon documents. Piling fact on damning fact, he shows that the vast majority of atrocities now attributed to "rogue" Shiite and Sunni militias are in fact the work of government-controlled commandos and "special forces," trained by Americans, "advised" by Americans and run largely by former CIA assets, Global Research reports.

We first reported here in June 2003 that the U.S. was already hiring Saddam's security muscle for "special ops" against the nascent insurgency and re-opening his torture haven, Abu Ghraib. Meanwhile, powerful Shiite militias – including Talibanic religious extremists armed and trained by Iran – were loosed upon the land. As direct "Coalition" rule gave way to various "interim" and "elected" Iraqi governments, these violent gangs were formally incorporated into the Iraqi Interior Ministry, where the supposedly inimical Sunni and Shiite units often share officers and divvy up territories.

Bush helpfully supplied these savage gangs – who are killing dozens of people each week, Knight-Ridder reports – with American advisers who made their "counter-insurgency" bones forming right-wing death squads in Colombia and El Salvador. Indeed, Bush insiders have openly bragged of "riding with the bad boys" and exercising the "Salvador option," lauding the Reagan-backed counter-insurgency program that slaughtered tens of thousands of civilians, Newsweek reports. Bush has also provided a "state-of-the-art command, control and communications center" to coordinate the operation of his Iraqi "commandos," as the Pentagon's own news site, DefendAmerica, reports. The Iraqi people can go without electricity, fuel and medicine, but by God, Bush's "bad boys" will roll in clover as they carry out their murders and mutilations.

For months, stories from the Shiite south and Sunni center have reported the same phenomenon: people being summarily seized by large groups of armed men wearing police commando uniforms, packing high-priced Glocks, using sophisticated radios and driving Toyota Land Cruisers with police markings. The captives are taken off and never seen again – unless they turn up with a load of other corpses days or weeks later, bearing marks of the gruesome tortures they suffered before the ritual shot in the head. Needless to say, these mass murders under police aegis are rarely investigated by the police.

Earlier this year, one enterprising Knight-Ridder reporter, Yasser Salihee, actually found several eyewitnesses willing to testify to the involvement of the U.S.-backed commandos in 12 such murders. The offer was shrugged off by the Interior Ministry's spokesman – an American "adviser" and veteran bones-maker from the Colombian ops. In the end, it didn't matter; Salihee was shot dead by a U.S. sniper at a checkpoint a few days afterwards.

The Bushists may have been forced to ditch their idiotic fantasies of "cakewalking" into a compliant satrapy, but they have by no means abandoned their chief goals in the war: milking Iraq dry and planting a permanent military "footprint" on the nation's neck. If direct control through a plausible puppet is no longer possible, then fomenting bloody chaos and sectarian strife is the best way to weaken the state. The Bushists are happy to make common cause with thugs and zealots in order to prevent the establishment of a strong national government that might balk at the ongoing "privatizations" that have continued apace behind the smokescreen of violence, and the planned opening of Iraq's oil reserves to select foreign investors – a potential transfer of some $200 billion of Iraqi people's wealth into the hands of a few Bush cronies, the Independent reports.

The violence is already dividing the county intomore rigid sectarian enclaves, the New York Times reports, as Shiites flee Sunni commandos and Sunnis flee Shiite militias in the grim tag-team of their joint endeavor. It's all grist for the Bushist mill: an atomized, terrorized, internally riven society is much easier to manipulate. And of course, a steady stream of bloodshed provides a justification for

maintaining a substantial American military presence, even as politic plans for partial "withdrawal" are bandied about.

There's nothing new in this; Bush is simply following a well-thumbed playbook. For example, in 1953 the CIA bankrolled Islamic fundamentalists and secular goon squads to destabilize the democratic government of Iran – which selfishly wanted to control its own oil – and pave the way for the puppet Shah, as the agency's own histories recount. In 1971, CIA officials admitted carrying out more than 21,000 "extra-judicial killings" in its "Phoenix" counter-insurgency operation in Vietnam. (The true number of victims is certainly much higher.) In 1979, the CIA began sponsoring the most violent Islamic extremist groups in Afghanistan – supplying money, arms, even jihad primers for schoolchildren – to destabilize the secular, Soviet-allied government and provoke the Kremlin into a costly intervention, as Robert Dreyfus details in his new book, *Devil's Game: How the United States Helped Unleash Fundamentalist Islam*. Later, Saudi magnate Osama bin Laden – whose family firm helped kick-start George W. Bush's business career – joined the operation, and his men were sent to America for "anti-Soviet" terrorist training, as Greg Palast reports. And of course, these examples only scratch the scorched-earth surface of America's double-dealings in this deathly shadow world.

This bi-partisan policy has been remarkably consistent for more than half a century: to augment the wealth and power of the elite, American leaders have supported – or created – vicious gangs of killers and cranks to foment unrest, eliminate opponents and terrorize whole nations into submission. The resulting carnage in the target countries – and inevitable blowback against ordinary Americans – means nothing to these Great Gamesters; it's merely the price of doing business. Bush's "incompetence" is just a mask for stone-cold calculation.

CF

http://www.chris-floyd.com/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=315&Itemid=1

Iraq's Death Squads

Sunday, December 4, 2005; B06

OF ALL THE bloodshed in Iraq, none may be more disturbing than the campaign of torture and murder being conducted by U.S.-trained government police forces. Reports last week in the Los Angeles Times and New York Times chronicled how Iraqi Interior Ministry commando and police units have been infiltrated by two Shiite militias, which have been conducting ethnic cleansing and rounding up Sunnis suspected of supporting the insurgency. Hundreds of bodies have been appearing along roadsides and in garbage dumps, some with acid burns or with holes drilled in them. According to the searing account by Solomon Moore of the Los Angeles Times, "the Baghdad morgue reports that dozens of bodies arrive at the same time on a weekly basis, including scores of corpses with wrists bound by police handcuffs." The reports followed a raid two weeks ago by U.S. troops on a clandestine

Baghdad prison run by the Interior Ministry, where some 170 men, most of them Sunni and most of them starved or tortured, were found.

The danger this development poses to Iraq, and to the prospects of a successful end to the U.S. mission there, ought to be obvious. A dirty war conducted by the Iraqi government against one ethnic group will make civil war inevitable. It will render impossible a political accord among Shiites, Sunnis and Kurds, while increasing the likelihood that Iraq will splinter. U.S. commanders will be unable to hand responsibility off to Iraqi forces without inviting a bloodbath, and the training mission that President Bush described at length in his speech on Wednesday will be utterly discredited. If there is to be any chance of achieving Mr. Bush's goals of a united and democratic Iraq that protects the rights of its minorities, the state-sponsored death squads and torture chambers must be dismantled.

Once again, however, Defense Secretary Donald H. Rumsfeld is ignoring a critical threat. Just as he dismissed the insurgency

in its formative months as a few "deadenders" and minimized the systematic breakdown of U.S. discipline in the handling of foreign prisoners as isolated freelancing, Mr. Rumsfeld now pretends not even to know about the government death squads. In a press conference last week, he called the reports "unverified comments." This despite the facts that U.S. troops uncovered the clandestine prison and that officials from the Army, FBI, Justice Department and U.S. Embassy are participating in an investigation.

Worse, Mr. Rumsfeld maintained that "the United States does not have a responsibility" to do anything about the crimes of the police forces it established and trained, other than "report it." Even the man he selected to be chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Marine Corps Gen. Peter Pace, could not support such an irresponsible position. Standing alongside Mr. Rumsfeld, he asserted that "it is absolutely the responsibility of every U.S. service member, if they see inhumane treatment being conducted, to intervene to stop it."

If Mr. Rumsfeld's view prevails, Mr. Bush's latest "strategy for victory" in Iraq will be fatally undermined. Many of the death squads are run by the Badr Organization, which is the military wing of the leading party in Iraq's Shiite-led government, the Supreme Council for the Islamic Revolution in Iraq. Its leader, Abdul Aziz Hakim, not only refused to acknowledge any wrongdoing in an interview last month with the Post's Ellen Knickmeyer, but asserted that U.S. forces were tying Iraqi hands and should get out of the way so that even tougher tactics could be adopted. Should that happen, any hope for peace in Iraq will be lost.

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Pentagon-Controlled Iraqi National Guard Implicated in Samarra Mosque Bombing

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As the "non-partisan" Council on Foreign Relations assures us, Iraqi National Guard troops are trained and fully "vetted" by the Pentagon. "National guard troops receive three weeks of formal training and then on-the-job training by working with U.S. forces," a CFR backgrounder explains. "The National Guard has replaced the Iraqi Civil Defense Corps as the largest security force in Iraq," reports the World Tribune. "The 45,000-member force has been trained and equipped by the United States, with help from Britain and Jordan." In short, the Iraqi National Guard is a subsidiary of the Pentagon, organized and trained to do the bidding of the Anglo-American occupation forces and their installed minions. Thus it should come as no surprise the Iraqi National Guard may play an important role in the recent bombing of the Golden Dome mosque in Samarra, according to locals.

Since it is unreasonable to expect Baghdad hotel-bound corporate media hacks to report anything beyond what is read from a Pentagon script inside the Green Zone, most Americans remain unaware of details implicating the Iraqi National Guard in the bombing. According to reports appearing on the humanitarian Iraqi League organization's Iraqi Rabita website and translated into English by the Iraqi blogger Baghdad Dweller (see original Arabic here and here), at least two witnesses saw "unusual activities by the ING [Iraqi National Guard] in the area around the mosque." Two mosque guards reported four men in ING uniforms had blindfolded them and planted explosives. A second witness, Muhammad al-Samarrai, the owner of an internet cafe in the area, was told to stay in his store and not leave the area. From 11 pm until 6:30 am, ten minutes before two bombs were detonated, the area surrounding the mosque was patrolled by "joint forces of Iraqi ING and Americans," according to al-Samarrai.

In addition to apparently facilitating the mosque bombing, Iraqi National Guard troops provided assistance to "more than a dozen masked Shia gunmen" attacking the Sunni al-Quds mosque in western Baghdad in the wake of the Samarra attack, according to the Times Online. In addition, "gunmen arrived [at the Maakel prison in Basra] in a fleet of cars and showed documents which claimed that they were from the Interior Ministry... and lynched at least eleven Sunni inmates, among them at least two Egyptians."

Last month, according to the Washington Post, the Iraqi Interior Ministry was implicated in the operation of death squads targeting Sunnis. Moreover, according to John Pike, an expert on classified military budgets, as cited by Robert Dreyfuss in an article for the American Prospect, a 2004 Iraqi appropriation bill contained $3 billion for paramilitary units. The "bulk of the covert money" went to

"support U.S. efforts to create a lethal, and revenge-minded, Iraqi security force" and also "an Iraqi secret police staffed mainly by gunmen associated with members of the puppet Iraqi Governing Council," thus revealing the situation in Iraq is not precisely as the hand-fed corporate media would have us believe.

Of course, two eye witnesses should not be considered conclusive evidence the Pentagon puppet Iraqi National Guard is behind the mosque bombings in Samarra. However, when added to the wealth of evidence from various sources detailing the existence of a Anglo-American "counterinsurgency" program in Iraq (including the now largely forgotten and never referenced by the corporate media story of two British covert operatives caught red-handed in terrorist behavior last September) the incident should at least stir a modicum of suspicion.

Naturally, any such suspicion will go duly unnoticed by the corporate media, already in the process of blaming the "al-Qaeda movement," as James Jeffrey of the State Department characterized the perpetrators, and in the process leading the media down the preferred path, discouraging for now the absurd idea, as suggested by at least one member of the slavish corporate press, that Iran was somehow behind the bombing of the mosque containing the entombed bodies of two revered spiritual leaders of Shia Islam. "I think we should focus on al-Qaeda at this point," Jeffrey declared. "There are plenty of reasons to focus on Iran on other issues," for instance Iran's illusory nuclear weapon program, dispelled some time ago by the International Atomic Energy Agency.

The US Role in Iraq's Sectarian Violence

By Stephen Zunes*

Foreign Policy in Focus
March 6, 2006

The sectarian violence which has swept across Iraq following last month's terrorist bombing of the Golden Mosque in Samara is yet another example of the tragic consequences of the U.S. invasion and occupation of Iraq. Until the 2003 U.S. invasion and occupation, Iraq had maintained a longstanding history of secularism and a strong national identity among its Arab population despite its sectarian differences.

Not only has the United States failed to bring a functional democracy to Iraq, neither U.S. forces nor the U.S.-backed Iraqi government in Baghdad have been able to provide the Iraqi people with basic security. This has led many ordinary citizens to turn to extremist sectarian groups for protection,

further undermining the Bush administration's insistence that American forces must remain in Iraq in order to prevent a civil war.

Top analysts in the CIA and State Department, as well as large numbers of Middle East experts, warned that a U.S. invasion of Iraq could result in a violent ethnic and sectarian conflict. Even some of the war's intellectual architects acknowledged as much: In a 1997 paper, prior to becoming major figures in the Bush foreign policy team, David Wurmser, Richard Perle, and Douglas Feith predicted that a post-Saddam Iraq would likely be “ripped apart” by sectarianism and other cleavages but called on the United States to “expedite” such a collapse anyway.

As a result, the tendency in the United States to blame “sectarian conflict” and “long-simmering hatreds” for the Sunni-Shiite violence in Iraq is, in effect, blaming the victim.

Fostering Fragmentation and Conflict

One of the longstanding goals of such neoconservative intellectuals has been to see the Middle East broken up into smaller ethnic or sectarian mini-states, which would include not only large stateless nationalities like the Kurds, but Maronite Christians, Druze, Arab Shiites, and others. Such a policy comes not out of respect for the right of self-determination—indeed, the neocons have been steadfast opponents of the Palestinians' desire for statehood, even alongside a secure Israel—but out of an imperial quest for divide-and-rule. The division of the Middle East has long been seen as a means of countering the threat of pan-Arab nationalism and, more recently, pan-Islamist movements. Given the mosaic of ethnicities and sects in the Middle East, with various groupings having mixed together within both urban and rural settings for many generations, the establishment of such ethnic or sectarian mini-states would almost certainly result in forced population transfers, ethnic cleansing, and other human suffering.

The risk of Iraq breaking up into a Sunni Kurdish state, a Sunni Arab state, and a Shiite Arab state is now very real. And, given the intermixing of these populations in Baghdad, Mosul, Kirkuk, and scores of other cities, the potential exists for the most violent breakup of a country since the partition of India sixty years ago. Recent weeks have shown ominous signs of what may be yet to come on a massive scale, as scores of Shiite families were forced to flee what were once mixed neighborhoods in and around Baghdad.

Even barring a formal breakup of the country, the prospects of a stable unified country look bleak. As the Los Angeles Times reported on February 26, “The outlines of a future Iraq are emerging: a nation where power is scattered among clerics turned warlords; control over schools, hospitals, railroads, and roads is divided along sectarian lines; graft and corruption subvert good governance; and foreign powers exert influence only over a weak central government.”

Much of Iraq's current divisions can be traced to the decision of U.S. occupation authorities immediately following the conquest to abolish the Iraqi army and purge the government bureaucracy—both bastions of secularism—thereby creating a vacuum which was soon filled by sectarian parties and militias. In addition, the U.S. occupation authorities—in an apparent effort of divide-and-rule—encouraged sectarianism by dividing up authority based not on technical skills or ideological affiliation but ethnic and religious identity. As with Lebanon, however, such efforts have actually exacerbated divisions, with virtually every political question debated not on its merits, but on which group it potentially benefits or harms. This has led to great instability, with political parties, parliamentary blocs, and government ministries breaking down along sectarian lines.

Even army divisions are separated, with parts of western Baghdad being patrolled by army units dominated by Sunnis while eastern Baghdad is being patrolled by Shiite-dominated units. Without unifying national institutions, the breakup of the country remains a real possibility.

Sectarian Conflicts

Theologically, there are fewer differences between Sunnis and Shiites than there are between Catholics and Protestants. In small Iraqi towns of mixed populations with only one mosque, Sunnis and Shiites worship together. Intermarriage is not uncommon. This harmony is now threatening to unravel.

Shiite Muslims, unlike the Sunni Muslims, have a clear hierarchy. (Ayatollahs, for example, are essentially the equivalent of Catholic cardinals.) As a result, the already-existing clerical-based social structures in the Shiite community were among the few organizations to survive Saddam's totalitarian regime and were therefore more easily capable of organizing themselves politically when U.S. forces overthrew the government in Baghdad in 2003. Sunni and secular groupings, then, found themselves at a relative disadvantage when they suddenly found themselves free to organize.

As a result, the United States initially insisted on indefinite rule by Iraqis picked directly or indirectly by Washington. However, when hundreds of thousands of Shiites took to the streets in January 2004 demanding the right to choose their country's leaders, the Bush administration reluctantly agreed to hold direct elections. Having been dominated by Sunnis under the Baathists, the Hashemites, and the Ottomans, the Shiite majority was eager to rule. Not surprisingly, elections have brought Shiite religious parties to power which have since marginalized other groups and imposed their repressive and misogynist version of Islamic law in parts of Iraq where they dominate, particularly in the south of the country.

Sunni opposition to Shiite dominance does not just stem from resentment at losing their privileged position in Iraqi political life under the former dictatorship. Indeed, Saddam Hussein suppressed his fellow Sunni Arabs along with Sunni Kurds and Shiite Arabs.

What U.S. officials have failed to recognize is that Iraq's Sunni Arab minority, regardless of its feelings about Saddam Hussein's regime, has long identified with Arab nationalism. Not surprisingly, the armed resistance which emerged following Saddam's removal from power three years ago by U.S. forces has come largely from the Sunni Arab community. The insurgency has also targeted the U.S.-backed Shiite-dominated Iraqi government, which came to power as a result of the U.S. invasion and which many see as being puppets of the U.S. occupation. They also fear that the Iraqi government may identify more with their fellow Shiites of Iran than with other Arabs. More radical Sunni chauvinists, many of whom are foreign Salafi extremists like Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, have engaged in widespread terrorist attacks against Shiite civilians and their holy places.

Despite its dependence on the United States and ties to Iran, however, the Shiite-dominated Iraqi government has its own agenda. Culturally and linguistically, Iraq's Shiites are every bit as Arab as the Sunnis. Yet while the vast majority of the country's Shiite Arab majority has no desire to be pawns of either Iran or the United States, the response by the Shiite-dominated Iraqi government and Shiite militias has done little to lessen Sunni fears and hostility. Seeing their government faced with a growing insurgency and their community falling victim to terrorist violence, the Shiites have responded with aggressive counter-insurgency and counter-terrorist operations against the Sunni community. Human rights abuses by Shiites against the Sunni minority have increased dramatically, polarizing the country still further.

Even before the latest upsurge in sectarian violence, the Baghdad morgue was reporting that dozens of bodies of Sunni men with gunshot wounds to the back of the head would arrive at the same time every week, including scores of corpses with wrists bound by police handcuffs.

Death Squads

John Pace, the outgoing head of the United Nations' human rights monitoring group in Iraq, has reported that hundreds of Sunnis are being subjected to summary execution and death from torture every month by Iraqi government death squads, primarily controlled by the Ministry of the Interior.

High-ranking American officers have reported that radical cleric Muqtada al-Sadr's Al-Mahdi Army maintains a strong presence in the regular police force, including up to 90% of the 35,000 officers currently working in the northeastern part of Baghdad. In addition, the Iranian-trained Badr Brigade dominates police commando units. A police unit known as the Punishment Committee goes after civilians believed to be flouting Islamic laws or the authority of Shiite militia leaders, particularly Sunnis.

The Shiite government of Iran, long cited for its human rights abuses by both the Bush administration and reputable human rights organizations, has actively supported Shiite militias within the Iraqi

government and security forces. (Despite this, the Bush administration and its supporters—including many prominent Democrats—have been putting forth the ludicrous theory that Iran is actually supporting the anti-Shiite and anti-American Sunni insurgency.) Iraqi Interior Minister Bayan Jabr was trained by Iran's infamous Revolutionary Guards and later served as a leader of the Badr Brigade, the militia of the Supreme Council for the Islamic Revolution in Iraq.

Americans have also trained Interior Ministry police and commandoes, though—unlike some notorious cases in recent Latin American history—there is little evidence to suggest that U.S. trainers have actively encouraged death squad activity. Still, there is little question that actions by U.S. occupation troops over the past three years—such as the torture of detainees, the hair-trigger response at checkpoints, the liberal use of force in heavily-populated civilian neighborhoods, and the targeted assassinations of suspected insurgent leaders—have contributed to the climate of impunity exhibited by forces of the Iraqi government.

Mr. Pace has also observed how U.S. troops are making things worse by rounding up large numbers of innocent young Sunni men and detaining them for months. Noting how such “Military intervention causes serious human rights and humanitarian problems to large numbers of innocent civilians,” he lamented at the fact that many of these detainees, in reaction to their maltreatment, later joined Sunni terrorist groups following their release.

Despite last month's terrorist bombing of the Shiite shrine and the tragic killings that followed, however, there were also impressive signs of unity. In cities throughout Iraq, Sunnis and Shiites mobilized to protect each other's mosques and neighborhoods.

Even the young firebrand Shiite cleric Muqtada Al-Sadr emphasized to his followers, “It was not the Sunnis who attacked the shrine ... but rather the occupation [forces] and Ba'athists.” He called on his followers not to attack Sunni mosques and ordered his Al-Mahdi Army to “protect both Shia and Sunni shrines.” He went on to say, “My message to the Iraqi people is to stand united and bonded, and not to fall into the Western trap. The West is trying to divide the Iraqi people.” In a later interview, Sadr claimed, “We say that the occupiers are responsible for such crisis [Golden Mosque bombing] ... there is only one enemy. The occupier.”

Similarly, Sunnis were quick to express their solidarity with Shias in a series of demonstrations in Samara and elsewhere. Anti-American signs and slogans permeated these marches. Indeed, there is a widespread belief that it was the United States, not fellow Muslims or Iraqis, which bears responsibility for the tragedy. Even Iraqi Vice President Adel Abdul Mehdi claimed the United States was responsible for the bombing of the Golden Mosque, “especially since occupation forces did not comply with curfew orders imposed by the Iraqi government.” He added, “Evidence indicates that the occupation may be trying to undermine and weaken the Iraqi government.”

Though charges of a U.S. conspiracy are presumably groundless, it does underscore the growing opposition by both communities to the ongoing U.S. military presence in their country and how the United States has little credibility left with either community as a mediator, peacekeeper, overseer, or anything else.

And it underscores the urgency for the United States to withdraw from Iraq as soon as possible.

About the Author: *Stephen Zunes is Middle East editor for Foreign Policy in Focus (www.fpif.org). He is a professor of Politics at the University of San Francisco and the author of* ***Tinderbox: U.S. Middle East Policy and the Roots of Terrorism (Common Courage Press, 2003)***.

http://www.globalpolicy.org/security/issues/iraq/sectarian/2006/0306usrole.htm

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Neocon Advocates Civil War in Iraq as "Strategic" Policy

Daniel Pipes Finds Comfort in Muslims Killing Muslims

By John Walsh

Counter Punch
March 9, 2006

One of the abiding myths about the War on Iraq is that the neocons were too stupid to realize that they would confront an unrelenting, indigenous resistance to their occupation of Iraq. Unwittingly, the story line goes, they led the U.S. into a conflict which has now produced a civil war. But this simply does not fit the facts. The neocons clearly anticipated such an outcome before they launched their war as Stephen Zunes documents in Antiwar.com:

"Top analysts in the CIA and State Department, as well as large numbers of Middle East experts, warned that a U.S. invasion of Iraq could result in a violent ethnic and sectarian conflict. Even some of the war's intellectual architects acknowledged as much: In a 1997 paper, prior to becoming major figures in the Bush foreign policy team, David Wurmser, Richard Perle, and Douglas Feith predicted that a post-Saddam Iraq would likely be "ripped apart" by sectarianism and other cleavages but called on the United States to "expedite" such a collapse anyway."

Yet the line persists that the neocons had no idea what they were getting into. This cannot be correct as they think a lot about what they do and they plan carefully. Not only is that charge absurd on the face of it, but it is arrogant on the part of those who level it. And it is the worst political mistake possible ¬ underestimating your adversary.

Now the neocons are beginning to advocate for civil war in Iraq quite openly. The clearest statement of this strategy as yet comes from pre-eminent neocon and ardent Zionist Daniel Pipes. In a recent piece in the Jerusalem Post, Pipes spills the beans. He writes:

"The bombing on February 22 of the Askariya shrine in Samarra, Iraq, was a tragedy, but it was not an American or a coalition tragedy. Iraq's plight is neither a coalition responsibility nor a particular danger to the West. Fixing Iraq is neither the coalition's responsibility, nor its burden. When Sunni terrorists target Shi'ites and vice versa, non-Muslims are less likely to be hurt. Civil war in Iraq, in short, would be a humanitarian tragedy, but not a strategic one."

As ever Pipes's anti-Arab racism is simply too rabid to be hidden. If Muslims are busy killing other Muslims, then "non-Muslims" are less likely to be hurt!! What does that say about Muslim lives? And of course both Sunnis and Shia must be labeled "terrorists." Pipes is doing nothing more endorsing than the oldest of colonial strategies: Divide et impera.

Pipes envisions other "benefits" to the civil war "strategy," such as inhibiting the spread of democracy in the Middle East. Pipes again: "Civil war will "terminate the dream of Iraq serving as a model for other Middle Eastern countries, thus delaying the push toward elections. This would have the effect of keeping Islamists from being legitimated by the popular vote, as Hamas was just a month ago."

And finally Pipes declares that a civil war "would likely invite Syrian and Iranian participation hastening the possibility of confrontation with these two states, with which tensions are already high." It is no secret that the neocons have been aching for the U.S. to strike at Iran and Syria, so here too the civil war strategy of the neocons makes good sense to them. Of course the added death and destruction is not their problem since the victims will be Muslims and some unwitting American soldiers.

There seems to be only one fly in this neocon ointment. That is, will it be possible to control the flow of oil in the midst of turmoil in Iraq. Here I suspect the neocons who put Israel first might have their differences with the oil barons, presently their allies. But the neocons have certainly given a lot of thought to that, and it probably explains why the location of the large and permanent U.S. bases in Iraq is not known. It would seem, however, that there are great uncertainties in this and it may cause some trouble among the neocons and their allies over the longer term.

The only real question is whether the civil war emerged spontaneously as Wurmser, Perle and Feith predicted or whether the Iraqis had to be goaded into it by the U.S. Given all the intrigues and mysteries in Iraq, including the bombing of the Askariya shrine in Samarra and the shadowy death squads and torture chambers which the U.S. claims to know nothing about, the latter seems more likely as of now. It certainly fits the civil war strategy, and it is quite reminiscent of the Iran-Iraq war in which the U.S. and Israel fanned the flames that consumed over 1 million Muslim lives.

The fact is that the neocons who control U.S. strategy have no interest in preventing a civil war but only in inciting one. Sectarian tensions were virtually unknown in Iraq before the U.S. invasion. And in fact the Iraqi Shia fought loyally as Iraqis against Iranian Shia in the disastrous Iran-Iraq war. So to avoid an Iraqi civil war, the most important step is to get all the U.S. troops home and thus to terminate U.S. provocations. For it is now crystal clear that the neocon strategy is one of civil war to divide and destroy Iraq; and such a strategy amounts to a crime against humanity.

http://www.globalpolicy.org/security/issues/iraq/sectarian/2006/0309strategic.htm

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May 22, 2006
LAW AND DISORDER

How Iraq Police Reform Became Casualty of War
By MICHAEL MOSS

This article was reported by Michael Moss, David Rohde and Kirk Semple and written by Mr. Moss.

BAGHDAD, Iraq — Jon Villanova had just arrived in Basra last spring to help build a police force in southern Iraq when bodies began piling up. Twenty or more Iraqi civilians were dragged from their homes, shot in the head and dumped in the streets.

The evidence pointed to some of the very people he and his team of foreign police advisers were struggling to train: a cluster of senior officers working out of a station called Jamiat.

But local officials resisted efforts to prosecute the officers. By the time officials in Baghdad intervened nine months later, the corruption in Basra had gotten so bad that the 135-member internal affairs unit, set up to police the police, was operating as a ring of extortionists, kidnappers and killers, American and Iraqi officials said.

"There we are, trying to build a police force that people can believe in, and they are committing murders," Mr. Villanova said. "It was a quagmire."

So was much of the rest of Iraq. An initial effort by American civilians to rebuild the police, slow to get started and undermanned, had become overwhelmed by corruption, political vengeance and lawlessness unleashed by the toppling of Saddam Hussein.

A year later, with the insurgency spreading with an unimagined ferocity, the United States military took charge of a second, broader campaign to reconstitute the police. On the ground, however, the military's plan for police units that could help restore order in Iraq would be no match for the forces

tearing at the country in places like Basra and Baghdad. And along the way, it would help fuel some of those forces.

The Americans had to reconstitute the police since officers fled in droves after the invasion, ahead of gangs of looters. But the rush to replenish the ranks lacked proper controls, American, British and Iraqi officials said, and in the process political loyalists of the newly powerful were made officers, and there were reports of police jobs sold for kickbacks of $100.

In recent background checks, police investigators found more than 5,000 police officers with arrest records for crimes that included attacks on American troops, American officials said.

When the rebuilt skeletal force became a target of the rapidly spreading insurgency, Americans turned to heavily armed police commando units that had been assembled by the Iraqis. They added firepower, but at a price.

An Iraqi official who helped create the special units said he warned Defense Secretary Donald H. Rumsfeld that they could become a weapon in Iraq's sectarian strife, much as Mr. Hussein's police had repressed the Shiite majority. Now, after a year in which a Shiite interior minister controlled the police, some special units stand accused by many Sunnis of operating as Shiite-dominated death squads.

The Iraqis have reined in some units, but others have received less attention. In one notorious incident, a brigade in northern Baghdad is suspected of kidnapping and killing 36 Sunni Arab men last August. Although a judge ordered the unit's commander, Brig. Gen. Bassem al-Gharrawi, arrested for murder, the arrest warrant was never executed, according to court records.

Lt. Gen. David H. Petraeus, who ran the military's police training program until last September, said he backed the creation of special police units "once we saw the fighting spirit and physical toughness of the units and the competence of their leaders." But he said he also sought to impose controls and vigorously pursue allegations of misconduct.

Like the rogue police units, other government security forces are also accused of having carried out massacres and violence on behalf of political or tribal groups. Turning all of those armed forces into an effective law enforcement mechanism is a prime challenge for the new Iraqi government formed over the weekend, and is central to the American strategy for exiting Iraq.

But reforming the police means overcoming a lot of history.

Under Mr. Hussein, the police were corrupt and ill disciplined, less an instrument of law than of repression. The police became targets of the mobs of looters that roamed Baghdad after Mr. Hussein's overthrow, and then of the insurgents, who have repeatedly bombed police stations and recruiting lines. A 2006 internal police survey conducted northeast of Baghdad found that 75 percent of Iraqis did not trust the police enough to tip them off to insurgent activity.

Before the invasion, the Bush administration envisioned the police as adequate for keeping the peace and rejected a proposal backed by the Justice Department to deploy thousands of foreign police advisers.

Now the Pentagon is spreading 3,000 police trainers across the country. Maj. Gen. Joseph Peterson, who is in charge of the Pentagon's current program to remake the force, said his top priority was to improve basic skills while preventing corruption. He said the new effort was making strides toward the goal of having a force of 190,000 officers by early next year with better training and an appreciation of human rights.

"Every day the Iraqis improve their capability to do their job," General Peterson said.

The task ahead is reflected in recent confidential field reports filed by police trainers and obtained by The Times. The reports display a startling mix of heroics and incompetence, dedication and criminality.

In Diyala Province on March 21, where nearly two dozen police officers were killed when militants attacked their station, the police "fought until they ran out of ammunition," a police adviser reported. A week earlier, when the police in western Iraq were attacked, the officers abandoned their post or generally "responded horribly, displaying no firing discipline and failing to take defense positions."

One of the grimmest dispatches came from Mosul, where a police general reported militant "schools" operating inside a nearby prison teaching detainees insurgent tactics and extremist views. When an insurgent was released from prison, another general reported, officers at a station in Al Hawd fired their weapons to celebrate his freedom.

In Nineveh Province in northern Iraq, an alert major crimes unit stopped a car after noticing that it had a jerry-rigged bumper and that hidden inside were all the tools for an insurgent attack — mortar tube and shells, ski masks and AK-47 rounds. But just to the south in Al Tamin, a police officer seriously injured himself trying to disarm a roadside bomb by shooting it.

The Trouble in Basra

When the United States invaded Iraq, Basra seemed like a place where law and order was possible.

One of the country's largest cities, Basra escaped much of the ensuing insurgent violence in the first year of the war, and the police force there resumed operating after the United States military swept through on the way to Baghdad.

But a thicket of political and criminal groups that emerged after Mr. Hussein's ouster scrambled to gain footholds in the force.

For Stephen White, a retired British police official who said he had been promised hundreds of police trainers but got only 35, the trouble began with a near free-for-all in recruitment.

Local political leaders appointed police chiefs who in turn hired their friends, relatives and tribesmen. "This led to many being admitted initially who would under normal circumstances not be allowed to join," said Mr. White, who was working with the American military.

Bringing back former police officers also proved less than ideal. They were largely inept, sometimes brutal and prone to resist doing any real work, according to an American assessment of the police that was completed in June 2003. Some of the postinvasion looting of police stations, the report says, "could be traced to former police who were attempting to destroy incriminating records."

Initially, the police in Basra merely went easy on tribal members accused of crimes. Gradually, the corruption increased. Much of the city came to be controlled by sectarian groups, including the Iranian-influenced Badr Organization and the more radical Shiite militia controlled by Moktada al-Sadr, the Iraqi cleric who clashed with coalition forces in April 2004.

Evidence arose that the police began acting as the militia of these groups to carry out sectarian violence and enforce a fundamentalist creed. In December 2004, senior officers in the Basra Police Department were implicated in the killings of 10 members of the Baath Party, according to a State Department report.

By last September, two journalists who were reporting on the corruption and militia infiltration of the police were found dead. One was an Iraqi employee of The New York Times.

Mr. Villanova, the former police adviser, said he came across a variety of corruption during his eight months in Basra last year. Officers demanded $100 from men wanting to join the force. His team caught policemen taking bribes from smugglers.

Once, he recalls, his trainers went through a police checkpoint only to realize that Iraqi traffic was being diverted. The trainers quickly backed up, concluding it was an insurgent trap in which the police were complicit.

Then, starting last spring, the accumulating evidence in a string of assassinations pointed to the senior police officers at Jamiat. The officers acted so brazenly that the American advisers dubbed them the Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse, for the havoc they created, Mr. Villanova said.

The police chief in Basra, Gen. Hassan Sawadi, complained publicly last summer that he could not trust most of his men, and that corruption was rampant, but that he was powerless to fire even the worst offenders.

The killings complicated American operations because the station also housed the Iraqi police intelligence unit. American intelligence officers operating in Basra who passed on tips, like the location of people suspected of being insurgents, had to make their reports vague on the assumption they would get leaked to the militants.

But American and British police advisers said the governor of Basra, Muhammad Musbeh al-Waili, insisted on maintaining control over the police force. Shortly before Mr. Villanova left Basra last fall, his frustrations bubbled up when he saw the governor at a public event.

"This is terrible to say," Mr. Villanova said. "I saw the governor and I thought, 'You know, I've got a loaded weapon here and we could eliminate this nightmare.' "

The governor did not respond to requests for comment. At a news conference early this month, Mr. Waili lashed back at his critics and called for the ouster of the police chief and an Iraqi Army general.

The Jamiat station made headlines in September when British troops, who are handling military operations in southern Iraq, broke into the station to rescue two of their officers who had been arrested and accused of exchanging fire with Iraqi police at a checkpoint.

Then in November, a team from Baghdad arrived to clean things up, starting with the internal affairs unit. "All the members of that office were corrupt," said Brig. Ahmed Hamid, the chief of the Interior Ministry's internal affairs office in Baghdad.

David Everett, a former assistant district attorney in Queens and Brooklyn who served as Mr. Hamid's adviser until recently, accompanied him to Basra and said, "It was like the 'Gangs of New York' on steroids."

To form a new internal affairs unit in Basra, Mr. Hamid is importing police officers from other parts of Iraq who he hopes will be impartial and whose families will face less risk of reprisal. His first efforts to prosecute police officers there had not gone well.

He said the judicial system in Iraq remained so weak that he was able to bring charges against only six of the internal affairs police officers. Then, all six were acquitted for lack of evidence because witnesses were too fearful to testify.

On Saturday, Majed al-Sari, an Iraqi Defense Ministry adviser, said in an interview that violence in Basra had gotten so bad that murders were now running about one every hour.

Building Special Units

As the political and criminal forces in Basra began to replicate themselves elsewhere in Iraq, the United States military was focusing on what seemed like a far more pressing problem. The insurgency had started to swell by early 2004, and the Pentagon realized that the police were in no shape to help stabilize the increasingly volatile country.

Asked to back up a Marine offensive on the militant stronghold of Falluja, police units tried and fled. Other officers abandoned their posts in southern Iraq rather than face Mr. Sadr's militia. More were killed in assaults on their stations. Some were ambushed returning from a training academy in Jordan.

Up to then, the police training had been handled largely by civilian contractors. In March 2004, the Pentagon handed control of the effort to one of its generals.

Maj. Gen. Paul D. Eaton was already working to build a new Iraqi Army when he got the job. Instead of getting more resources to train the police, his $2.2 billion budget was cut by a fifth, General Eaton said.

"You just look to the money, look to the people sent over to do it, the numbers to do it, you just have to conclude this wasn't important in their minds," said General Eaton, who is now retired and has become a critic of Mr. Rumsfeld's handling of the war.

That summer, General Eaton was replaced by General Petraeus, a former commander of the Army's 101st Airborne Division. General Petraeus said a reassessment of the police that Mr. Rumsfeld oversaw through weekly teleconferences called for increasing the force's firepower.

General Petraeus reworked their curriculum to give them two weeks of combat training, and opened the spigot to military supplies. The police had been equipped with pistols and baseball caps, and now started getting AK-47's, body armor and helmets.

Then his team discovered a faster way to toughen the force.

The Iraqi interior minister, Falah al-Nakib, said he was desperate to contain the surging violence in Baghdad but had only 8,000 police officers who were largely untrained, illiterate and unreliable. "The recruiting was done by U.S. officials who didn't know who they were hiring," he said in an interview.

Mr. Nakib began building special units within the police, its men drawn largely from the Republican Guards and Special Forces of Mr. Hussein's army. The commandos, as they were called, were seasoned and skilled military officers, and they were given the tools — heavy machines guns and armored vehicles — to confront the insurgents.

British military officials on General Petraeus's team said they had already been envisioned such special police units, and the Pentagon equipped, trained and inserted a growing number of them into the conflict. In Mosul on Nov. 14, 2004, a commando unit led by an American Army colonel waged a blood-soaked battle against insurgents trying to overrun a police station, the Pentagon reported. The officer, Col. James H. Coffman Jr., was given a Distinguished Service Cross, the second-highest military award.

Steps were also taken to train the units like the regular police, with courses in human rights and the rule of law. A civilian complaint process was set up, and last spring teams of military personnel were assigned to oversee them in the field.

But even as the special police units fought successfully, the American and British officials who helped create them remained worried. The special police units were created so quickly that the recruits were not initially subjected to the fingerprint checks that other police recruits and officers underwent for criminal records, American and British officials said. Also, Iraqi officials at first had direct control over the units despite the objections of American military officials who wanted to oversee them, the officials said.

"We saw them as a good thing, something with which to take on the insurgents," said Andrew Mackay, a British brigadier general who worked for General Petraeus. "But you could see that if we didn't get this right, it would quickly be something that the Minister of Interior, depending on who he was, could turn into his own little army."

Mr. Nakib said that before he left his post in April 2005, he met with Mr. Rumsfeld in Baghdad and told him the Shiite political parties who were coming into power that summer would hijack the commandos for use as their own militia.

"I warned him that there would be problems," said Mr. Nakib, now a member of Parliament.

Steve Casteel, an American security expert who served as Mr. Nakib's adviser, said Mr. Rumsfeld nodded and said, " 'We understand your concerns.' " Mr. Casteel said Mr. Nakib raised the same alarm with other officials, including Gen. George W. Casey Jr., the top commander in Iraq.

General Petraeus said his team helped Mr. Nakib screen out recruits who had criminal records or belonged to the Baath Party, and then vigorously pursued allegations of misconduct. He said that during his time in Iraq he never received evidence of the police carrying out clearly sectarian violence, but that at his insistence three commando leaders were fired or moved to lesser positions for detainee abuse or corruption.

At the same time, he said, he concluded that the United States needed to support Mr. Nakib's drive to create the special units, given the growing insurgency. "Nakib was trying to deal with serious security challenges and to show that the new government could develop Iraqi solutions to Iraqi problems, as opposed to just relying on coalition forces to solve every problem," General Petraeus said.

When the Iraqi government changed hands in 2005, Mr. Nakib, a Sunni, was replaced by Bayan Jabr, a former officer in the military wing of the Shiite party known as the Supreme Council for the Islamic Revolution in Iraq.

The Supreme Council perceived the police force as dominated by Sunnis and along with Mr. Jabr inserted its Shiite loyalists into the ministry and the special police units.

In late 2005, Mr. Jabr ordered the hiring of 1,300 police commandos from the Shiite stronghold of Najaf, said Gerald Burke, an American police adviser at the time.

"The pace of the hiring grew frantically," Mr. Burke said.

James Steele, a retired United States Army colonel who also helped develop the special police as a member of General Petraeus's team, said he did not regret their creation, but rather saw their misuse by sectarian groups as one of the biggest threats to the American plans in Iraq.

"That is more dangerous in terms of our strategic success than the insurgency," he said. "If this thing deteriorates into an all-out civil war our position becomes untenable. Who the hell are you fighting?"

As the control over the special police shifted from Sunnis to Shiites, even the new name one unit gave itself evoked an image of escalating violence: the Wolves became the Volcanoes.

Suspects in a Massacre

In the early morning of Aug. 24, 2005, about 50 men wearing police uniforms swept into the Huriya neighborhood in northern Baghdad and dragged 36 Sunni Arab men from their homes, according to a State Department report. Their bodies were found near the Iranian border with bullet holes in their heads, their faces disfigured by acid.

Suspicion fell on the Volcanoes.

Mr. Nakib had created the special unit when he was the interior minister. But now, with him out of power, the unit was led by a police commander he said he had fired, General Gharrawi.

Mr. Nakib said he dismissed General Gharrawi for disobeying an order to assist other police officers in the restive city of Ramadi. "After I left, they brought him back and promoted him to commander," Mr. Nakib said.

Eventually, enough evidence was gathered to implicate General Gharrawi in the Huriya massacre, and on Nov. 28 an Iraqi judge issued a warrant for his arrest on murder charges.

But the warrant was never executed. General Gharrawi continued to lead the brigade until earlier this year and remains employed by the Ministry of Interior.

In April, The Times, which obtained a copy of the arrest warrant, presented it to Maj. Gen. Hussein Kamal, the deputy interior minister for intelligence, and Mr. Hamid, who is in charge of internal affairs. Both men said they had never seen it before.

"If I received this order, I would execute it within five minutes," General Kamal said.

Ann Bertucci, a spokeswoman for the Civilian Police Assistance Training Team in Baghdad, said that a team of American military advisers was attached to the Volcano Brigade last August, but that they were unaware of the allegations concerning the Huriya massacre or the outstanding arrest warrant.

General Gharrawi declined to comment.

Mr. Jabr, who replaced Mr. Nakib last summer, said he was not ignoring the arrest warrant. He said the ministry was obliged to conduct its own internal review before referring a ministry official to the civilian court system.

Once the inquiry is completed, the ministry's legal adviser will submit a recommendation to the minister, and the minister will decide the course of action. Mr. Jabr said he had the legal authority to dismiss the case.

"Be sure of one thing," the minister said in an interview in his office. "I'm interested in the rule of law."

He said he had reassigned General Gharrawi to a relatively low-profile job in the operations room several weeks ago, pending the outcome of an internal investigation.

Mr. Jabr denied that his forces were guilty of sectarian crimes or were influenced by militias tied to the country's powerful Shiite political parties. He and other government officials have blamed private security forces and criminals masquerading as policemen for the crimes.

On Saturday, Mr. Jabr was appointed finance minister. His successor in the Interior Ministry has yet to be appointed.

The power of sectarian rifts in Iraq to influence police operations gained international prominence in November. American soldiers discovered a secret prison run by Interior Ministry officials in Baghdad where 173 malnourished prisoners, mostly Sunni Arabs, complained of being tortured. At the time, several Iraqi officials said the police working there were members of the Shiite Badr Organization.

Senior American military officials said Mr. Hamid's internal affairs group had opened 96 criminal investigations against Iraqi police officers, with 26 cases ending in court convictions and 16 in administrative punishment.

While American military officials acknowledge that the special police are responsible for some abuses, they said they were uncertain how much of the death squad activity attributed to the police was really their doing.

They said much of the kidnapping and assassination in Iraq that involved men wearing police commando uniforms might be militia members impersonating the police.

Mr. Jabr said numerous other Iraqi ministries had their own security guards and police officers who operated beyond his control. One, the Facilities Protection Service, which guards pipelines and other infrastructure in Iraq, mushroomed from 4,000 men in 2003 to more than 140,000 today, and is now spread among more than a dozen ministries.

Four police brigade leaders have been relieved of their commands for rights abuses or other wrongdoing, and in February, American troops arrested 22 highway patrol officers who confessed that they planned to execute a Sunni Arab prisoner. Four of them are believed to have links to the Badr Organization.

This month, Mr. Jabr said he acted against more of his own police officers, arresting a general and 17 other ministry employees on charges they were kidnapping for ransom.

Policing the Police

General Peterson sat at a table in his Baghdad office in April and fingered a thick, white binder. It contained his plan for remaking the police force, laid out in 950 tasks.

He is the third general to be assigned to the Pentagon's third plan for the Iraqi police. He conceded that he was a peculiar choice for the job since he had never created any organization from scratch, much less a police force of nearly 190,000.

"I'm an armor officer, which doesn't qualify me for anything but combat," General Peterson said.

But after consulting with police experts, General Peterson said it became clear to him that some cornerstones needed to be laid. First among them, he said, was creating a system to go after bad police officers. "I went to the Minister of Interior and said, 'Policing the police is critical and you have no one doing this job,' " General Peterson said.

Together, they created an internal affairs operation, and brought in Mr. Hamid to run it. Mr. Hamid is also wrestling with myriad armed security forces and guards whose operations are spread throughout the Iraqi government.

General Peterson said he often felt as if he were dealing with 3,700 years of Hammurabi, the former ruler of Babylon whose portrait he keeps on his office wall. It was Hammurabi who established the

legal code of an "eye for an eye," and General Peterson said that translated into police officers who had "difficulty understanding why we want to treat a known criminal like we treat others."

He said his team also needed to focus on improving the basic skills of officers.

"We were into building quantity," he said of the period before his arrival. "I'm not going to be critical of my predecessors. They had their mission, and they executed it about as well as they could have. We are just trying to make it better."

Khalid Ibrahim Ahmed, who had nearly completed a 10-week course when he was interviewed in April at the academy near Sulaimaniya in northern Iraq, said, "We need to get more training about how to fight the terrorists. We need to know how their systems work. We need training on bigger weapons. We are very worried about I.E.D.'s," or improvised explosive devices.

While more than 70,000 regular policemen have undergone such training, an additional 38,000 Iraqis — mostly those who were officers under Mr. Hussein — have been given only a three-week training course, Ms. Bertucci said. Other police units, including the special and border police have also received some academy training. In the field, the number of police trainers is being increased to 3,000, and most of the trainers are military personnel. The new teams will include 750 civilian contractors, up from the 500 who have been struggling to do the job by themselves. One of their missions is to determine just how much the police are retaining from their academy courses, officials said.

But recruits are learning powerful lessons outside the classroom.

Yasir Thamir Muhan, a 20-year-old recruit from Tikrit, said he fell into despair six days after joining the force. On March 2, when he and others were leaving training camp, insurgents drove up to their unprotected ragtag convoy and shoved a machine gun through the sunroof of their sedan.

Five recruits were killed. When he helped rush the wounded to a nearby village, people there panicked and forced them to drive off, too scared to be seen helping the police.

Hardened by the experience, he has drawn up his own rules of rough justice to deal with any insurgents he arrests who are set free by the country's troubled law enforcement system.

"I will take my revenge by my hand," Mr. Muhan said.

Michael Moss and Kirk Semple reported from Baghdad for this article, and David Rohde from New York. Qais Mizher contributed reporting from Baghdad and Sulaimaniya, and an Iraqi employee of The New York Times from Basra.

http://www.nytimes.com/2006/05/22/world/middleeast/22security.html?ex=1305950400&en=c13f497261ed46e4&ei=5088&partner=rssnyt&emc=rss&pagewanted=all

Police Abuses in Iraq Detailed

By Solomon Moore

Los Angeles Times

July 9, 2006

Confidential documents cover more than 400 investigations. Brutality, bribery and cooperation with militia fighters are common, a report says.

Brutality and corruption are rampant in Iraq's police force, with abuses including the rape of female prisoners, the release of terrorism suspects in exchange for bribes, assassinations of police officers and participation in insurgent bombings, according to confidential Iraqi government documents detailing more than 400 police corruption investigations. A recent assessment by State Department police training contractors echoes the investigative documents, concluding that strong paramilitary and insurgent influences within the force and endemic corruption have undermined public confidence in the government. Officers also have beaten prisoners to death, been involved in kidnapping rings, sold thousands of stolen and forged Iraqi passports and passed along vital information to insurgents, the Iraqi documents allege.

The documents, which cover part of 2005 and 2006, were obtained by The Times and authenticated by current and former police officials. The alleged offenses span dozens of police units and hundreds of officers, including beat cops, generals and police chiefs. Officers were punished in some instances, but the vast majority of cases are either under investigation or were dropped because of lack of evidence or witness testimony.

The investigative documents are the latest in a string of disturbing revelations of abuse and corruption by Iraq's Interior Ministry, a Cabinet-level agency that employs 268,610 police, immigration, facilities security and dignitary protection officers. After the discovery in November of a secret Interior Ministry detention facility in Baghdad operated by police intelligence officials affiliated with a Shiite Muslim militia, U.S. officials declared 2006 "the year of the police." They vowed a renewed effort to expand and professionalize Iraq's civilian officer corps.

President Bush has said that the training of a competent Iraqi police force is linked to the timing of an eventual withdrawal of U.S. troops and a key element in the war in Iraq. But U.S. officials say the renegade force in the ministry's intelligence service that ran the bunker in Baghdad's Jadiriya neighborhood continues to operate out of the Interior Ministry building's seventh floor. A senior U.S. military official in Iraq, who spoke on condition of anonymity in an interview last month, confirmed that one of the leaders of the renegade group, Mahmoud Waeli, is the "minister of intelligence for the Badr Corps" Shiite militia and a main recruiter of paramilitary elements for Interior Ministry police forces. "We're gradually working the process to take them out of the equation," the military official said. "We developed the information. We also developed a prosecutorial case."

Bayan Jabr, a prominent Shiite, was interior minister at the time of the investigations detailed in the documents and has been accused of allowing Shiite paramilitary fighters to run rampant in the security forces. U.S. officials interviewed for this article said the ability of Jabr's replacement, Jawad Bolani, to deal with the corruption and militia influence in the police force will be a crucial test of his leadership.

The challenges facing Bolani, a Shiite engineer who has no policing experience and entered politics for the first time after the U.S.-led invasion in 2003, are highlighted in a recent assessment by police trainers hired by the State Department. According to the report, corruption in the Interior Ministry has hampered its effectiveness and its credibility with Iraqis. "Despite great progress and genuine commitment on the part of many ministry officials, the current climate of corruption, human rights violations and sectarian violence found in Iraq's security forces undermines public confidence," according to the document, titled "Year of the Police In-Stride Assessment, October 2005 to May 2006." Elements of the Ministry of the Interior, or MOI, "have been co-opted by insurgents, terrorists and sectarian militias. Payroll fraud, other kinds of corruption and intimidation campaigns by insurgent and militia organizations undermine police effectiveness in key cities throughout Iraq," the report says.

The report increased tensions between the Pentagon, which runs the police training program, and the State Department, which has been pushing to expand its limited training role in Iraq, said a U.S. official who spoke on condition of anonymity. The report strikes contradictory tones, saying that the Interior Ministry continues to improve and that its forces are on track to take over civil security from U.S. and Iraqi military elements by the end of the year, while outlining shocking problems with corruption and abuse. "The document basically shows that Interior Ministry management has failed," the U.S. official said. "The document didn't directly address U.S. policy failures, but I guess it does show that too." Interior Ministry officials have taken steps to "improve detainee life," the report says. "However, there are elements within the MOI which continue to abuse detainees." Referring to Sunni Arab insurgent groups and Shiite paramilitary organizations, the report says "these groups exploit MOI forces to further insurgent, party and sectarian goals. As a result, many Iraqis do not trust the police. Divisions falling along militia lines have led to violence among police. "MOI officials and forces

are widely reported to engage in bribery, extortion and theft," the report says. "For example, there are numerous credible reports of ministry and police officials requiring payment from would-be recruits to join the police."

The report's findings are borne out in hundreds of pages of internal investigative documents. The documents include worksheets with hundreds of short summaries of alleged police crimes, letters referring accused officers to Iraq's anti-corruption agencies and courts, citizen complaints of police abuse and corruption, police inspector general summaries detailing financial crimes and fraudulent contracting practices and reports on alleged sympathizers of Saddam Hussein's former regime. In crisp bureaucratic Arabic, the documents detail a police force in which abuse and death at the hands of policemen is frighteningly common.

Police officers' loyalties appear to be a major problem, with dozens of accounts of insurgent infiltration and terrorist acts committed by ministry officials. In one case, a ring of Baghdad police officers — including a colonel, two lieutenants and a captain — were accused of stealing communications equipment for insurgents, who used the electronics for remote bomb triggers. In another case, a medic with the Interior Ministry's elite commando force in Baghdad was fired after he was accused of planting improvised explosives and conducting assassinations.

In Diyala province, where last month U.S. forces killed Abu Musab Zarqawi, the leader of Al Qaeda in Iraq, investigators were looking into allegations that a police officer detonated a suicide vest in the bombing of a police station. In a separate case, a brigadier general, a colonel and a criminal judge were accused of taking bribes from a suspected terrorist.

Police officers have also organized kidnapping rings that abduct civilians for ransom — in some of the cases, the victims are police officers. Two Baghdad police commanders kidnapped a lieutenant colonel, stole his ministry car and demanded tens of thousands of dollars from the victim's family, the documents allege. In that case, the two accused, Maj. Gen. Naief Abdul Ezaq and Capt. Methaq Sebah Mahmoud, were fired and taken to court. The abbreviated notes on the case do not make clear whether the two officers received further punishment, but the fact that the documents mention the courts being involved in the incident at all makes it stand out from the rest of the cases. In another case, the bodyguards of a police colonel in the Zayona neighborhood of Baghdad kidnapped merchants for ransom, according to the documents. In the capital's Ghazaliya neighborhood, a lieutenant and his brother-in-law kidnapped a man and demanded a huge ransom from his family.

Abuse by police is also a common theme. The victims include citizens who tried to complain about police misbehavior, drivers who disobeyed traffic police commands and, in several cases, other police officers. But detainees appear to be targeted most often. The U.S. military has been working with the Iraqi government to standardize detention facilities and policies, and the U.S. assessment claims that

several site visits turned up no serious human rights abuses. But the ministry documents reveal a brutal detention system in which officers run hidden jails, and torture and detainee deaths are common. The documents mention four investigations into the deaths of 15 prisoners at the hands police commando units.

In the Rusafa section of Baghdad, a predominantly Shiite area known for its strong militia presence, police tortured detainees with electricity, beatings and, in at least one case, rape, according to the internal documents. Relief was reserved for those detainees whose relatives could afford to bribe detention officers to release them. The Wolf Brigade, a notorious commando unit, illegally detained more than 650 prisoners, according to the documents. During a mass release of Wolf Brigade prisoners last November, a Times reporter saw dozens of malnourished men among the released detainees; several were so weak that they could not walk without assistance.

Female detainees are often sexually assaulted. According to the documents, the commander of a detention center in the Karkh neighborhood of the capital raped a woman who was an alleged insurgent in August. That same month, two lieutenants tortured and raped two other female detainees.

Among the strongest reprimands — and the most outrageous corruption — detailed in the documents are the cases involving two provincial police chiefs who were removed. Brig. Gen. Adil Molan Ghaidan, the former Diyala province police chief, was accused of drinking on the job, illegally confiscating real estate from citizens, knowingly paying ghost employees and harboring suspected terrorists. He was removed from the force about six months ago, police sources say.

Before his removal several months ago, Maj. Gen. Ahmad Mohammed Aljiboori, the former Nineveh province police chief, allegedly assigned a private army of 1,400 officers to personal security detail. According to an internal inquiry, Aljiboori claimed the force was not under the Interior Ministry's control. The document also accuses Aljiboori of detaining 300 Iraqis for two months without charges, wasting thousands of dollars on extravagant banquets and neglecting antiterrorism efforts to focus on arresting car dealers. The document says Aljiboori confiscated most of the cars for personal gain and gave some of them away to friends as gifts.

U.S. officials say they have known about Interior Ministry abuses for years but have done little to thwart them, choosing instead to push Iraqi leaders to solve their own problems. "The military had been at the bunker prior to the raid in November," said the U.S. official, referring to the Jadiriya facility. "But they said nothing." Some U.S. military leaders want American officials to have a stronger hand with the Interior Ministry, arguing that continuing corruption and militia influence are dashing any hope for a speedy American withdrawal. Another senior military official said U.S. policy in regard to the ministry was confused and disengaged. The official, who asked not to be identified because his comments impugned his superiors, said the Pentagon and State Department had failed to coordinate

their efforts and were disengaged from the Iraqi police leaders. "They sit up there on the 11th floor of the ministry building and don't talk to the Iraqis," the official said of U.S. police trainers assigned to the Interior Ministry headquarters tower. "They say they do policy and [that] it's up to the Iraqis — well, they're just doing nothing. The MOI is the most broken ministry in Iraq."

http://www.globalpolicy.org/security/issues/iraq/election/2006/0709policeabuses.htm

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The Iraqi Civil Conflict: Another Reason for Bringing the Troops Home

By Raed Jarrar*

Foreign Policy in Focus

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The ongoing civil conflict in Iraq is one of the major issues being considered in the debate over future U.S. military and political steps in Iraq. A growing number of analysts argue that U.S. military forces must stay in Iraq to prevent a full-scale sectarian civil war between Sunni and Shia Arabs in Iraq. But evidence exists that the roots of the Iraqi civil conflict is political rather than sectarian, and that the best solution is finding a way to bring the troops home.

A History of Conciliation

The history of Muslim-Muslim conflict in the Middle East is a long and bloody one. The division of Islam into Shia and Sunni sects was the result of two famous battles: the Battle of the Camel (656 AD) and the battle of Seffin (657 AD). Islamic history is full of wars between different regional powers and within Sunni and Shia Muslims. And while Sunni and Shia Iraqis have undergone some periods of sectarian tension, these tensions have never led to a full scale conflict like those seen in Bosnia, Rwanda, or even in Lebanon.

Shia and Sunni Iraqis have lived in harmony for centuries. Historically the two sects have lived in the same areas, intermarried, worked together and have had few conflicts based on religious beliefs. Arab Iraqis, especially in contemporary history, have not prioritized their religious or sectarian belonging over national identity. Iraqi nationalism united Iraqi Shia against Iranian Shia for eight years during the 1980s in the Iran-Iraq war.

Iraqi tribal systems have also integrated Sunni and Shia communities as many Shia tribes have Sunni branches among them and vice versa. In addition, lines between the sects have been blurred in Iraq. One of the core concepts in Shiaism worldwide is glorifying Muhammad's descendents. Anyone who is

in the prophet's line of descent is called Sayyed (pl. Sadah). Therefore, being a Sayyed implies that one is a Shia Muslim. Iraq is the only case in the world where there are Sunni Sadah.

Despite the fact that Iraqis never had a sectarian civil war, foreign politicians have a history of misguided analyses about the issue. In 1920, the British Prime Minister David Lloyd George warned of a civil war in Iraq if the British army withdrew, which is the exact same thing heard today in the U.S. Ironically, the same Iraqis George wanted to protect from each other actually united in a revolution against the British occupation forces.

Roots of the Civil Conflict in Iraq

When the Iraqi regime was brought down by the U.S. in the second week of April 2003, U.S. forces entered most of the Sunni Arab cities without engaging in major combat. Iraq's largest province, al-Anbar, containing the cities of Fallujah, Ramadi, Haditha, and Qaem, surrendered under an agreement with local Sunni tribal leaders. When Baghdad fell, there was a striking increase in criminal activities and full-scale looting of the public sector, but no signs of civil clashes. But the situation quickly changed as the U.S. administration, led by Paul Bremer assumed control over Iraq. Early on Bremer, attempting to put an Iraqi face on the occupation, appointed members to the Iraqi Governing Council. Aimed to reflect Iraq's diverse ethnic, political, and religious mix the Governing Council comprised 13 Shia, five Sunnis, five Kurds, one Christian, and one Turkoman. But instead of bringing unity to the political sphere, this reflection of Iraq's diversity when thrust into the political playing field became the base for sectarian division in Iraq.

The new political order engineered by the U.S. resulted in deep divisions between Iraqis. Entering into a marriage of convenience, Shia and Kurds were eager to join the government but for different reasons. Shia politicians from the Supreme Council for Islamic Revolution in Iraq (SCIRI) and Dawa parties were supported and encouraged by Iran to take a part of the new regime. Kurdish political leaders, who participated in the U.S.-led coalition that brought down Saddam, sought the opportunity to rule the country instead of continuing to be the central government's victim. And while included in the government, Sunni Iraqis were scattered without strong leadership, were victims of de-baathification policies, and were reeling at their sudden loss of political power.

Just as the political order was reflecting chaos, so too was the military order. The vacuum in the military and police forces created by de-Baathification was being filled by tens of thousands of Kurdish and Shia Iraqi militia members. This pushed sectarian tension to a new level as most of the Sunni Arabs who did not join these forces became the primary target. As a result, a new set of targets emerged for the resistance; Iraqis who were against the occupation began attacking and killing other Iraqis who were taking a part of the new government or its military and police forces. The civil crisis was born.

The Real Face of Fighting

While most Sunnis reject the new government, the violence is not led exclusively by Sunnis. By the fall of 2003, there were two main Shia groups and the beginnings of two main Sunni-dominated groups. On the Shia side, there was interfighting between two groups with strong militias: one which participated in building the new regime, (e.g. al-Hakim's SCIRI, al-Jaafari's Dawa, and other politicians blessed by Ayatollah al-Sistani), and another opposing any political work under the occupation (e.g. al-Sadr's movement and others blessed by Ayatollah al-Baghdadi, Ayatollah al-Hasani, etc.). On the Sunni side, there were clashes between Sunni Arabs who were against the new regime and Sunni Kurds who took a part of the new regime, the largest being open fighting between the two sides in Fallujah in April 2004.

The al-Sadr movement includes more than 5 million Shia Iraqis, which makes it the biggest single social group in Iraqi society. In other words, the number of al-Sadr supporters is equal to or more than the number of all Sunni Arab Iraqis. Sunni Arabs demonstrated the ability of small groupings of people to unleash large amounts of violence, while the al-Sadr movement showed a centralized pattern with potential capacity to organize large-scale attacks. Although the groups adopted different patterns of armed attacks they clearly showed that the use of the term "insurgency" must be expanded to all of the anti-regime military players--not just limited to those groups with Sunni identity.

Although most of the military players often identify on a sectarian basis, there is little evidence that their actions are directly against other sectarian groups. For example, Ansar al-Sunnah Army and the Islamic Army in Iraq are two of the largest insurgent groups who have claimed responsibility for hundreds of attacks against the U.S.-led coalition. Both of these groups frequently distribute videos showing executions and attacks against Iraqi soldiers and policemen. These videos accuse Iraqi soldiers and policemen of being "traitors" and "collaborators" who are getting their "fair judgment" as ordered by the Quran. There are no videos or announcements with statements such as "let's kill the Shias" or "let's get rid of the Sunnis." Instead the focus is on targeting and killing the "collaborators." There is a long list of other insurgent groups that adopt similar logic and terminology where no traces for a Shia-Sunni oriented conflict can be found. They do contain grandiose statements about fighting the occupation and they make speeches about a holy war between Islam and Christianity and Judaism, but nothing is said about a war between Sunni Muslims and Shia Muslims.[1]

Even the now-deceased leader of al-Qaeda in Iraq, one of the most extremist and brutal movements in the world, sought to target "the collaborators." In one of Abu-Musab al-Zarqaw's last statements before his death, he asked Iraqis not to participate in the newly elected government, threatening to kill "secular Zionist Kurds," "vengeful Shias," and "collaborator Sunnis" who take part in the "Crusader's Regime." While there is a strong fundamentalist anti-Shia strain in al-Zarqawi's announcements, he never gave a direct order to kill Shia because they were Shia.[2]

Despite the popular public belief that Iraq's insurgents are causing most of the violence, it is clear that all sides involved in the conflict are contributing to the killing and destruction. Analytical sources tracking civilian deaths in Iraq provide a clear analysis of casualties in the conflict.

The Iraqi Civilian Casualties: A Breakdown

One of the most informative reports about Iraqi civilian casualties was produced last year by Iraq Body Count (IBC). IBC systematically calculates Iraq's casualties based on the English-language media's daily reports of casualties, including reports from the Arab media. The IBC report analyzed 24,865 Iraqi civilian deaths reported by the media through the first two years of the occupation, through March 19, 2005.3 These cases do not represent the full number or an estimate of casualties, as IBC clarifies, but represent the so-far documented portion of the total number based on media reports.4

According to IBC, "Anti-occupation forces/insurgents" killed 9.5% of civilian victims, "unknown agents" killed 11%, and "post-invasion criminal violence" accounted for 36% of all deaths.5 These numbers show that most of Iraq's civilians were not falling because of the sectarian violence during the first two years, and that most Iraqi civilians were killed because of the post-occupation security void. These same statistics indicate that the U.S. military has caused more than one fourth of the total documented cases so far, including those who perished as a result of "major operations."

Despite the deteriorating situation over the last six-months, the most recent updates of IBC's database show that "criminal violence" and "unknown agents" are responsible for most of the killing in the last year as well. IBC's figures challenge mainstream accounts which identify Iraqi insurgents as responsible for the majority of the ongoing death and destruction.

What is troublesome about IBC's statistic is the term "unknown agents" which reflects the growing concern about civil war, leaving hundreds of Iraqi casualties without a known murderer. These faceless killings are carried out in two main forms: "ID card assassinations" and attacks on mosques and churches. But the motivations behind the attacks are unclear. Some Iraqis accuse regional powers like Iran, Syria and Israel of having a hand in the attacks; other Iraqis accuse internal groups like the Badr militias, al-Qaida, and the Baath party (al-Awdah Party and Muhammad Army) of initiating such attacks to further destabilize the country. Further confusing the situation lately, Iraqi leaders from Sunni and Shia communities, like the Council of Muslim Scholars and the al-Sadr movement, are blaming the U.S.-led coalition for all the sectarian based attacks. The rumors and uncertainties surrounding these deaths not only fuel speculation around a Shia-Sunni civil war, but also could fuel a possible Shia and Sunni alliance against the U.S.-led coalition.

The Askari Shrine

The al-Askari Mosque, a shrine to Imam Ali al-Hadi (died in 868 AD) and his son Imam Hassan al-Askari (died in 874 AD) in Samarra, was bombed and partly destroyed on February 22, 2006 in what seems to be the biggest sectarian based attack to date in Iraq.6 Hundreds of news stories and political speeches were written around the world within hours of the bombing predicting a full scale Sunni-Shia war in Iraq. The al-Askari attack was represented as the event that would start the awaited sectarian civil war. In fact, many scholars, politicians, and journalists considered the attack as the milestone marking the official beginning of the ongoing sectarian civil war.

Ironically enough, the very same shrine whose destruction was expected to trigger a sectarian civil war between Sunni and Shia Iraqis is an exceptional case where a Shia shrine is ran and managed by Sunni Sadah. For many centuries, the shrine has symbolized this harmonious integration where Shia Muslims visited al-Askari shrine at least once a year and were welcomed as religious tourists by their fellow Sunni Iraqis. In describing his future shrine al-Askari said, "My shrine in Samarra will be a refuge for both Sunni and Shia Muslims."

Alarmed by the Samarra attack Iraqi political and religious leaders started working quickly to contain the situation. Al-Sistani made a very rare appearance on national TV to ask his followers to calm down. Al-Sadr cut short his visit to Lebanon to return to Iraq, where he deployed his followers and militias around the country to protect Sunni mosques from attacks and started a new trend of Shia-Sunni joint prayers. Main Sunni leaders started a campaign of condemning the attack and working to stop further tension and the Iraqi government announced a temporary curfew and spread armed forces around the country.

Iraqi religious and political leaders, with the help of millions of their supporters around the country, managed to contain the situation in a relatively successful way that prevented any military clashes between Shia and Sunni establishments. Iraqis worked alone, without any help from the U.S.-led coalition, and prevented a full-scale sectarian civil war.

The Role of the U.S. Military

In the aftermath of the bombing it was clear that Iraqis were working hard to stop the spread of violence, but the U.S. military was noticeably absent. Fox News reported that, "U.S. military units in the Baghdad area were told Thursday morning to halt all but essential travel."7 Other news sources wrote, "The U.S. military ordered the U.S. soldiers in Baghdad to stay in their barracks and not to circulate if it could be helped."8 With these reports, it is clear that the U.S. army was not planning, in the case of al-Askari attack or for any other incident, to interfere and protect Iraqi citizens from killing each other. So even if the U.S. was concerned about sectarian civil war, there were no plans to stop it.

According to the United Nations Security Council, the U.S. is supposed to be acting as the "Authority" to promote the welfare of the Iraqi people including the restoration of security and stability. In addition, the UNSC calls upon "all concerned to comply fully with their obligations under international law including in particular the Geneva Conventions of 1949 and the Hague Regulations of 1907." During the bombing of Samara, the U.S. coalition failed on both accounts, raising questions about the role and usefulness of the coalition itself.

The Current Situation

The attack on the al-Askari shrine was one of many attacks carried out by faceless hit men attempting to trigger a sectarian conflict in the last two years. None of the past attacks initiated a full-scale sectarian civil war, nor did the al-Askari incident. Despite the exaggerated predictions and assessments about its effect and consequences, the number of casualties has not dramatically changed since the attack.

Nevertheless, there is a continuing increase in the total number of Iraqi civilian casualties during the last three years. IBC's online counter indicates that the daily average of Iraqi civilian casualties has increased from around 20 in the first year (excluding the initial invasion in March 2003), to more than 30 in the second, reaching to 40 in the third year. The numbers continue to increase this year as well.

According to another monthly breakup by Iraq Coalition Casualties Count (ICCC), another credible online counter based on media archives, the deaths from the date of al-Askari Mosque bombing until the last week of May 2006 indicate a noticeable raise in the monthly toll from around 550 Iraqis in the last four months prior to the attack to around 850 Iraqis in the four months after the attack.[9] The increase in civilian deaths, while trending higher, has not reached the record set in August 2005 when more than 1,500 civilians were killed during the month. The al-Askari incident was a very tragic and catastrophic attack but it did not start a sectarian civil war.

Seeking a Resolution

The situation in Iraq has proved that as bad as it gets, things can always get worse. Indeed, 2006 is the worst year of violence since the initial invasion. But while continuing sectarian-based propaganda and attacks are increasing the civil tension around the country, it has not yet reached a point where a full-scale sectarian civil war is erupting. But as noted earlier, even if a civil war is around the corner (or is already occurring), the U.S. military has proved that it will not intervene in such a scenario. With general security in shambles, the U.S. military directly responsible for thousands, if not tens of thousands of Iraqi civilian deaths, reconstruction stalled, and with the growing tension seen as politically motivated, there is little evidence that the U.S. can resolve the Iraqi crisis.

Based on this scenario, the ongoing Iraqi-Iraqi conflict can only be resolved when the U.S.-led occupation begins the process of leaving Iraq completely. As suggested by Iraqis and a growing number of U.S. politicians, setting a timetable for withdrawal should be one of the first steps to stop the current cycle of death and violence in Iraq. The conflict in Iraq is happening between Iraqis who are against getting involved in any political action under the occupation, and Iraqis who are building their new regime despite the occupation. But ironically, both of these groups want the occupation to end. A recent poll from World Public Opinion shows that 87% of Iraqis want a timetable for U.S.-led coalition withdrawal.10 A majority of Iraq's leaders have asked for setting a timetable as well. When President Bush visited Iraq last month, Iraq's Vice President asked him to set a timetable for withdrawal. This request is supported by Iraq's president. In addition, Iraq's National Security Advisor, Dr. Mowaffak Al-Rubaie requested a similar "roadmap" for complete withdrawal of the U.S.-led coalition in a recent op-ed in The Washington Post.11 The vast majority of Iraq's MPs, religious leaders and political leaders want to see Iraq free of foreign troops.

But the U.S. has thwarted calls for a withdrawal by Iraqis. Last month, the Iraqi Prime Minister proposed a comprehensive 28 point package for Iraqi reconciliation and an end to violence after months of Iraqi-Iraqi discussions and meetings. The plan was warmly received by different Iraqi political, religious, and even insurgent leaders after it was published. But the U.S. embassy turned the 28 point package into a weaker 24 point plan which was rejected by all major Iraqi stakeholders. The four dropped demands included putting a timetable for pulling out the occupation troops, amnesty for anyone who has not killed civilians, compensation for civilian victims, and an immediate halt of all raids on homes and cities without Iraqi court orders.

While the U.S. embassy has rejected the wishes of Iraqis, U.S. citizens have a different opinion. For example, World Public Opinion's latest poll shows that if the new Iraqi government asks the U.S. to establish a timeline for withdrawing forces within the next two years, 71% of Americans said that the U.S. should do so. Just 28% said the U.S. should only reduce U.S. forces as the security situation improves in Iraq.12

Putting a timetable for withdrawing the U.S. troops, as have most of the other countries in the U.S.-led coalition, would be the first step in the right direction to follow the demands of both the Iraqi and U.S. people to stop the war and begin grappling with the much bigger issue of dealing with its consequences. With over $320 billion spent, more than 2,500 U.S. soldiers dead, and countless Iraqis killed, the time for such an alternative is now.

End Notes

1. See, International Crisis Group, "In their Own Words: Reading the Iraqi Insurgency," February 15, 2006. Available at:

http://www.crisisgroup.org/library/documents/middle_east___north_africa/iraq_iran_gulf/50_in_their_own_words_reading_the_iraqi_insurgency.pdf

2. Media reports have been selective in translating al-Zarqawi's speeches. For example, The Washington Post translated a part of his last audio statement where he called for the killing of Grand Ayatollah Ali al-Sistani, the highest ranking Shia cleric. But The Washington Post neglected to mention that al-Zarqawi threatened in the same very statement to kill all the leaders of the Association of Muslim Scholars, the highest ranking group of Sunni clerics in Iraq. The full translation of al-Zarqawi's statement shows his anti-collaborator politics, while The Washington Post version makes it seem like an anti-Shia policy.

3. Iraq Body Count, "A Dossier of Civilian Casualties: 2003-2005," July 2005. Available at: http://reports.iraqbodycount.org/a_dossier_of_civilian_casualties_2003-2005.pdf

4. Other studies, like the well known paper "Mortality Before and After the 2003 Invasion of Iraq: Cluster Sample Survey," published in the British medical journal, The Lancet, estimated on the basis of a random national sample that 100,000 Iraqis, in excess of pre-war rates, had died from a variety of causes (including accidents and illness, as well as violence) in the first 75% of the period that IBC's dossier covers.

The violent deaths in The Lancet estimate were extrapolated from 21 documented deaths, which is too small a sample for deriving a reliable breakdown on which actors have been doing what proportion of the killing throughout Iraq. However, on careful examination, the breakdown of violent deaths in The Lancet's 2004 sample is quite similar to that found in IBC over the same period, suggesting that although non-randomized, IBC's recorded deaths may not be biased in any particular direction. IBC's tally in the tens of thousands of deaths can therefore provide a highly-detailed and useful breakdown.

5. IBC defines insurgents as, "Those who target U.S.-led forces, ordinary police and other security forces, military installations and support workers for U.S.-led forces." 6. The Shrine, built in 945 AD, is considered to be one of the four most important Shia shrines in Iraq. One of the reasons why this shrine is highly valued by Shia Muslims is that al-Askari and his wife are the parents of al-Mahdi, the 12th Imam and a messianic figure whose return is expected by Shia. In addition, al-Mahdi was last seen around his parents' graves in 878 AD before he disappeared, which was another reason why the shrine was first built.

7. "More Than 100 Killed in Iraq Following Mosque Attack," Fox News, February 24, 2006. Available at: http://www.foxnews.com/story/0,2933,185782,00.html.

8. Cited in "Three Years and Counting," The Nation, editorial, March 27, 2006. Available at: http://www.thenation.com/doc/20060327/editors.

9. Author's calculations. Iraq Coalition Casualties Count, "OIF Iraqi Deaths," ND. Available at: http://icasualties.org/oif/IraqiDeaths.aspx.

10. "New WPO Poll: Iraqi Public Wants Timetable for US Withdrawal, But Thinks US Plans Permanent Bases in Iraq," World Public Opinion, January 31, 2006. Available at: http://www.worldpublicopinion.org/pipa/articles/home_page/165.php?nid=&id=&pnt=165&lb=hmpg2.

11. Mowaffak al-Rubaie, "The Way Out of Iraq: A Road Map," The Washington Post, June 20, 2006.

12. "Comparing Americans and Iraqis," World Public Opinion, March 24, 2006. Available at: http://www.worldpublicopinion.org/pipa/articles/brunitedstatescanadara/182.php?nid=&id=&pnt=182&lb=brusc.

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http://www.globalpolicy.org/security/issues/iraq/sectarian/2006/0712civil.htm

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Death squads in Iraq : who leads them ? what are their objectives ?

by Salah Al Mukhtar *(09 Dec 2006)*



The murderous terrorist operations that struck Iraqi citizens in the Revolution District (now Sadr District), known to have caused the death of 200 persons (Nov. 23, 2006, translator's note) made the situation in Iraq even worse inasmuch as Iran sponsored Safavid death squads took advantage of those crimes to commit equally horrible atrocities : thirty Sunnite muslims were publicly executed, mosques were ransacked and burnt down together with the children, women and old age persons who had sought refuge inside, regardless of the fact that mosques are muslim worship places that should be respected by anyone. Today, all the Iraqi victims of this bloodthirsty terrorism know who the terrorists are. They know that the death squads are USAmericans and Iranians. The Safavids in Irak contend that USAmericans, Takfiris and Saddamites are those who murdered these Shi'ite people for being Shi'ites. It is time to shed some light on who the death squads are, it is time to bring out the truth as to Iran's position towards Iraq and the whole Arab Nation.

The outset.

Years before Iraq's occupation, the Safavid political parties (1) dependent on Iran's Secret Services published on a website the names of hundreds of Iraqi personalities, of scientists and servicemen in the army, threatening them with elimination as soon as the national regime would have fallen. These lists still appear on the Web and can be found through Google.

The targeted personalities



They are the scientific elites, the best officers in the army, the patriotic political men, they are scholars, writers and distinguished artists. The motive put forward to justify their elimination is their loyalty to the national regime. Long before the occupation, some death squads had crept in from abroad and started liquidating dozens of Iraqi personalities whose names were on these lists. The perpetrators were members of the Badr Brigade stationed in Iran, where they used to repair once their heinous crimes had been carried out. When the occupation happened, things got even worse as the Badr and their death squads openly entered the country in the wake of the US invasion troops and under their protection, fulfilling an agreement concluded between US-UK and Safavid High Commands, stating that the latter pledged to support the occupation. The manhunt started at once. The Badr Brigade killers took the lead in physically liquidating thousands of scientists, experts, specialists of all kinds and Arab nationalist political personalities. Later on the Sadr Army followed suit and outmatched the Badr in savagery, especially when dealing with the Iraqi Arab Shi'ites, whom they accused of being Saddam's Shi'ites and sometimes Muawiya's Shi'ites(2) . In addition to these two main flows of providers in death squads, there are two smaller groups, the Hizballah (Iraqi) and the Hizb Addawa, which have both been constituted, trained and armed by Iran for many years. These particular death squads have specialized in liquidating those pilots and officers who had defeated the Iranian army during the 8-year war between the two countries, but also such political personalities of Arab nationalistic trend, who championed Iraq's arabity, thus not mere Baathists. This category of victims also included writers, artists and journalists. That is how the death squads have managed to eliminate thousands of the nation's elites.

The Safavid Iranian death squads had yet another aim, which was to loot Iraq's military and industrial equipment. It is why there is not one standing factory left in Iraq and why hundreds of modern motors, military planes and armoured cars have been carried away to Iran.

In the first puppet government to be constituted after the invasion, Iran's auxiliary political groups had manoeuvered to obtain the two important Home and War Offices and the USAmericans had been happy to oblige. The Home Office was granted to Bayan Jabr, an Iranian national *ante* occupation, afterwards renamed Soulagh, a word which is now used as a substitute for electric drilling machine in Iraq and elsewhere, for the general use he made of this implement to torture the unfortunate Iraqi to death, Sunnites and Shi'ites alike. Inside the Home Office building, where the Iranian Secret Services were present *en masse* to supervise the massacre of Iraqi patriots, Soulagh's agents did such a good job at disfiguring their victims that thousands of them could never be identified by their families and had to be buried in anonymous graves. Never, in all the history of Iraq had such savagery and barbary been at work, before the Iranian Safavid death squads came to display their knowhow.

After Soulagh... Negroponte.

When the Iraqi resistance managed to thwart the US plans and those of their Iranian ally, the US Administration sent over ambassador Negroponte, its best expert in the art of mass murder, whose name is linked to the " Salvador option ", which he put in practice when he was sent to Salvador as an " ambassador " by his government. The Salvadorian option is the well-known plan devised by the United States' Secret Services, in order to eliminate thousands of people deemed " favourable to armed guerilla in Latin America ". The real unmentioned aim was to terrorize the Salvadorian people, so that they stop or refrain from supporting the resistance to US imperialism. Negroponte is responsible for the assassination of tens of thousands in Salvador, where he is known as the worst butcher and the most sadistic tormentor in the country's history, in the same way as Soulagh the Iranian has won himself the title over the eight thousand years of Iraqi history.

Negroponte was appointed US ambassador for a short period but it was an extremely decisive one. After which he left Iraq, rewarded for his services by being made Head of the US National Security Department. During his short period in office, he delineated with great precision the aims and strategies of all the death squads, in order to extend their scope and efficiency. He also coordinated the actions of the US death squads proper and those of their Israeli colleagues, who had also entered Iraq just after the invasion. He ascribed the same objectives to both.

The US death squads, some of which were led by Ahmed Chalabi, Mouwaffat Rebei and also by kurdish Peshmergas, comprising thousands of mercenaries, both from Iraq and abroad, had one sole and common objective : to propagate terror among the Iraqis. This was the message conveyed by the severed heads shown on TVs and blamed on some groups of the national resistance. The rape of women, the sodomization of men and the mass murder of innocents were also meant to convince Iraqi that the invaders' massacre capacities were boundless. And of course the assassination of political

personalities, academics and scientists was meant not only to destroy the country's cultural and scientific wealth, but also to provoke a religious war and so break Iraq's unity.

Jalal Talabani Massoud Barzani

In fact, organizing the death squads is not being done by one sole authority. One might say they are divided in four groups. The first one is headed by the Israeli Mossad, the second by Iran, the third by **Barzani** and **Talabani**, and the fourth one by the US Secret Services. All cooperate in the physical elimination of academics, scientists, officers and patriots, as part of a common srategy which consists in bringing about the partition of the country in three separate regions : a Kurdish state up north, a Sunnite state in the center and a Shi'ite state in the South.

The unity in action of Iranian and USAmerican death squads was faced by some problems when the USAmericans became aware of the fact that their occupation of Iraq had not succeeded in achieving their own objective which was to colonize Iraq, but had achieved Israel's and Iran's instead. True enough the occupation has succeeded in destroying the Iraqi state and in bringing the country back, economically and industrially, to the Stone Age, as James Baker had promised Tarek Aziz it would, before having it attacked by 30 coalized countries in 1991. But the success is profitable above all to Israel, who considered Iraq, with Saddam Hussein as its leader, as the most serious threat to its security. The dismantling of Iraq is also highly beneficial to Iran, whom Iraq's victory in 1988 prevented from exporting its Safavid revolution in the rest of the moslem world. Now indeed the way is free for Iran to carry out this project. The USAmericans who succeeded in destroying Iraq with the help of Iran failed to straighten up its ruins and failed to reconstruct by way of their potent contractors, who were to do so subject to extravagant profits. Nor did they succeed in turning Iraq into that instrument they wanted it to become to help them build up their " Great Middle East " or " New Middle East. True enough, they do occupy Iraq, but they have lamentably failed in controlling and exploiting it, and that is why they are the great losers in that war.

What can they chose to do next ? The worst.

When the Iranians realized that their USAmerican allies were about to clip their claws and expel their Secret Services from Iraq, they removed their Iraqi column so as to occupy the South of the country, thus bringing about a religious partition *de facto*, with all the Shi'ites gathered in one region. The fulfilment of this obvious Safavid objective certainly meets with Israeli and US interests, as far as Iraq's dismantling is concerned. However, it also debars them from the opportunity of looting such an oil-rich region henceforth under total Iranian domination.

The USAmericans' reaction came twofold. On the one hand, they encouraged Iran to cut the country in two by creating a southern Iran-controlled federal emirate, on the other they started clipping Iran's claws elsewhere in the country.

At that point, the explosion at Imam Ali Hedi shrine happened in Samarra. This event constituted a dangerous breakpoint inasmuch as it was soon all too clear that the Iranian Secret Services had done the deed, in complete agreement with their USAmerican associates, in order to unleash a wave of interreligious massacres.

In this connection, the following facts were observed :

1. From the explosion on, the Sadr Army has taken the lead as far as religious cleansing is concerned, whileas the Badr Brigade and the other Safavid groups have limited their action to plain murders.

2. The Sadr Army proceedings are more barbarous by far than those of the other factions. One notices that if Soulagh manages to eliminate thousands of persons in the secret gaols of the Home Office building, the Sadr Army commit their murders in public, they hold public trials, hookhang and burn their victims' corpses for all to see, and issue statements in which they claim to be killing Sunnites " to avenge Shi'ite deads ".

3. The Sadr Army operations usually take place under the protection of US troops and Home Office. In the rare occasions on which they operate on their own without US help, US troopers merely stand by and let them finish their job of killing Iraqi citizens without interfering.

4. In a few occasions the US troops have tried to make themselves less unpopular with some agonizing victims of the Sadrists by building up a punctual operation against some isolated handful of Sadr killers, but never against the whole. Indeed they aim at enlisting the unfortunate survivors in the " new " Iraqi Army, in order to use them in large-scale operations against the Shi'ites, with the keyword : " smash all Iran's agents ! ".

So the USAmericans are engaged in making Iraq sit on a mountain of Iraqi skulls piled up by other Iraqi who kill under US and Iranian command, with the foreseeable natural consequence of breeding impregnable hates and unquenchable vengeances, in a destroyed and tormented country that is inexorably led to its partition to suit Israeli-Iranian-Us interests.

A glimmer of hope



From the above is appears clearly that the escalating operations of the death squads are revelatory of two things :

1. the sheer violence of the competition between USAmericans and Iranians, which has led them to bring the country to the verge of total destruction, in order to embezzle a large slice of it (Iran) and to dismember it after having expelled Iran from it (US).

2. the unexpected reality created by an Iraqi resistance including all the Iraqi nationals - Arabs, Kurds and Turkmens, Christians and Moslems, Sunnites and Shi'ites - a resistance indeed that is overcoming its dissensions and hastening to victory over the two circumstancial allies, irresistibly leading them towards a complex confrontation, the first victim of which will be the Iraki people again.

N.B. This paper was first published in *26 September*, the daily newssheet of the Yemenites Armed Forces, on December 7, 2006.

*For diplomatic reasons the author did not then mention Iran by name. He does it now as it is published outside Yemen.

Notes

1 – The Safaviyeh or Safavid dynasty (in persian صفویان, Safaviān) ruled Iran from 1501 to 1732. They were the first independant dynasty to do so in almost 1000 years . Originally the Safavids were members of a militant Sufi order, the Kizilbashs. It was their first Safavid ruler Ismail I, who prompted the Iranians to become converted to the Shi'ite doctrin, in order to assert his dynasty's authority against the dominating Sunni Ottomans. This enabled him to ground a powerful state on a specific identity. The Safavids have used their wealth to convert a great number of Iranians to Shi'a. It is under the first Safavids that Iran became a theocracy : Ismail's followers acknowledged him as *murshid kamil* " the perfect leader ", but also as emanating from God.

2 – Muawiya I or Mu'awiya ibn Abî Sufyân (معاوية بن أبي سفيان) was born in 603, the son of one of Prophet Muhammad's fiercest adversaries : Abu Sufyân ibn Harb. He was the first to assert the Umayyads' right to rule on a dynastic principle and to take the title of caliph in 661. Indeed he took it from Ali ibn Abi Talib, the son-in-law of Muhammad, after the battle of Siffin, as the result of an arbitration. He died in Damascus in 680. Before his death, he had his sonYazid ibn Muawiyah proclaimed caliph as Yazid I, thereby transforming an elective caliphate into an hereditary one.

Salah Al Mukhtar had worked at the Iraqi mission to the United Nations, then, in the years 1990-1991, at the Arab League as assistant to the Secretary General holding responsibility for Information. In the years 1993-1998 he headed the main Iraqi daily, al Jumhouriya. From 1999 he was Iraqi Ambassador to India and in 2003 to Vietnam.
Salah al Mukhtar lives currently in Yemen.

http://www.brusselstribunal.org/ArticlesIraq3.htm#Salah



January 9, 2007
Managing Escalation: Negroponte and Bush's New Iraq Team
by Dahr Jamail

As part of a massive staff shakeup of Bush's Iraq team last week, it was announced that John Negroponte, the current U.S. National Intelligence Director who has also conveniently served as the U.S. ambassador to Iraq from June 2004 to April 2005 is being tapped as the new Deputy Secretary of State.



It is a move taking place at roughly the same time when Mr. Bush is to announce his new strategy for Iraq, which most expect entails an escalation of as many as 20,000 troops, if not more. Bush has already begun preparations to replace ranking military commanders with those who will be more supportive of his escalation.

The top U.S. commander in the Middle East, Gen. John Abizaid, will likely be replaced by Adm. William Fallon, currently the top U.S. commander in the Pacific. Gen. George Casey, currently the chief general in Iraq, would be replaced by Army Lt. Gen. David Petraeus, who headed the failed effort to train Iraqi security forces. Thus, those not in favor of adding more fuel to the raging fire are to be replaced with those who are happy to oblige.

Former NSA director and veteran of over 25 years in intelligence, retired Vice Adm. Mike McConnell who happens to be an old friend of Dick Cheney (who personally intervened on his old buddy's behalf) will succeed Negroponte as national intelligence director. McConnell, willing to oblige his neocon pal Cheney, may prove more hawkish regarding Iran than Negroponte was.

The timing of this move is what should raise eyebrows, and for two main reasons. First, Negroponte is relieved of his job of intelligence director as the drums of war continue to be pounded by the die-hard neocons, and Negroponte wasn't playing quite loud enough to the Tehran tune. McConnell may well be able to carry a louder tune for his pal Cheney, which may come in the form of a sonata of manufactured intel to justify an attack on Iran, which is important since time is growing short for Cheney and Co.

Second and more immediate, the transfer of Negroponte into the State Department comes conveniently just as the announcement of the escalation of troops in Iraq is planned. Bush needs someone with experience in managing escalations and he needs look no further than this man. It is Negroponte who oversaw the implementation of the "Salvador Option" in Iraq, as it was referred to in *Newsweek* in January 2005.

Under the "Salvador Option," Negroponte had assistance from his colleague from his days in Central America during the 1980's, Ret. Col James Steele. Steele, whose title in Baghdad was Counselor for Iraqi Security Forces supervised the selection and training of members of the Badr Organization and Mehdi Army, the two largest Shi'ite militias in Iraq, in order to target the leadership and support networks of a primarily Sunni resistance.



Planned or not, these death squads promptly spiraled out of control to become the leading cause of death in Iraq. Intentional or not, the scores of tortured, mutilated bodies which turn up on the streets of Baghdad each day are generated by the death squads whose impetus was John Negroponte. And it is this U.S.-backed sectarian violence which largely led to the hell-disaster that Iraq is today.

Under Reagan, Negroponte was the U.S. ambassador to Honduras in the early 1980's where he played a major role in U.S. efforts to topple the Nicaraguan government. The political history of John Negroponte shows a man who has had a career bent toward generating civilian death and widespread human rights abuses, and promoting sectarian and ethnic violence.

In Honduras he earned the distinction of being accused of widespread human rights violations by the Honduras Commission on Human Rights while he worked as "a tough cold warrior who enthusiastically carried out President Ronald Reagan's strategy," according to cables sent between Negroponte and Washington during his tenure there. The human rights violations carried out by Negroponte were described as "systematic."



The violations Negroponte oversaw in Honduras were carried out by operatives trained by the CIA. Records document his "special intelligence units," better known as "death squads," comprised of CIA-trained Honduran armed units which kidnapped, tortured and killed hundreds of people. Negroponte had full knowledge of these activities while making sure U.S. military aid to Honduras increased from $4

million to $77.4 million a year during his tenure. Under his watch civilian deaths sky-rocketed into the tens of thousands. Negroponte has been described as an "old fashioned imperialist" and got his start during the Vietnam War in the CIA's Phoenix program, which was responsible for the assassination of some 40,000 Vietnamese.

At roughly that time, Col. James Steele was commander of the U.S. Military Advisor Group in El Salvador. He also smuggled weapons to the Contras in Nicaragua and lied about it to the Senate Intelligence Committee, as documented in the Final Report of the Iran/Contra Special Prosecutor.



As a result of the work done by Negroponte, assisted by Steele, during the winter of 2004 and early spring 2005, daily life in Iraq, as described by the *Washington Post*, looks like what the death squads generated in Central America under their watchful eyes: "Hundreds of unclaimed dead lay at the morgue at midday Monday – blood-caked men who had been shot, knifed, garroted or apparently suffocated by the plastic bags still over their heads. Many of the bodies were sprawled with their hands still bound."

Obviously it is better for Iraqi militias and resistance groups to be fighting each other instead of uniting to battle occupation forces. The age-old strategy of divide and conquer applied yet again.

Negroponte's strategy and oversight of the dirty war in Honduras assisted in producing a "victory" there, but it has failed dismally in Iraq. Nevertheless, when we have an Administration which refuses to accept reality, bringing him back into the fold of the State Department may be a clear signal that it is willing to see much more blood seep into the sands of Iraq in the hope that it might produce something akin to stability.



Negroponte's appointment signals that Bush hopes to tap into his experiences from the medium-intensity war in Central America to do the same once again in Iraq. Coupled with the changes in the military and diplomatic team in Iraq it is a clear signal that the Administration is ready, willing and able, to head down the course of massive and indiscriminant escalation. It must be stopped.

(Foreign Policy in Focus)

Find this article at:
http://www.antiwar.com/jamail/?articleid=10289

Who Are The Real Terrorists In Iraq?

- Clear Evidence British special forces are recruiting, training terrorists to heighten ethnic tensions
- Elite SAS wing with bloody past operates with immunity, provides advanced explosives
- Some attacks being blamed on Iranians

Steve Watson
Infowars.net
Monday, February 5, 2007
An article in the Sunday Telegraph this weekend pointed towards evidence that an secretive and elite unit of the British army is actively engaged in recruiting and training Iraqi insurgents and terrorists as double agents.

This confirms what many have speculated for a long time, that Britain and the US are deeply involved in bombings and attacks inside Iraq which are subsequently attributed either to Sunni insurgents or shadowy terrorist cells such as "Al Qaeda in Iraq".

The Telegraph article states:
Deep inside the heart of the "Green Zone", the heavily fortified administrative compound in Baghdad, lies one of the most carefully guarded secrets of the war in Iraq. It is a cell from a small and anonymous British Army unit that goes by the deliberately meaningless name of the Joint Support Group (JSG), and it has proved to be one of the Coalition's most effective and deadly weapons in the fight against terror.
Its members - servicemen and women of all ranks recruited from all three of the Armed Forces - are trained to turn hardened terrorists into coalition spies using methods developed on the mean streets of Ulster during the Troubles, when the Army managed to infiltrate the IRA at almost every level. Since war broke out in Iraq in 2003, they have been responsible for running dozens of Iraqi double agents.



A look into the history of the secretive JSG or Force Research Unit (FRU), the cover name it operated under in Northern Ireland, reveals the extent to which the British government supports and engages in acts of terrorism in order to further its agenda in occupied territories. Iraq, as it turns out, is unsurprisingly no exception.

The FRU is the same ultra secret cell of the SAS whose criminal activities in Northern Ireland were under investigation by former Scotland Yard commissioner Sir John Stevens for more than a decade, during which time it emerged that the unit was involved in the murder of civilians in Northern Ireland.

According to Detectives, 'Military intelligence was colluding with terrorists to help them kill so-called "legitimate targets" such as active republicans...many of the victims of these government backed hit squads were innocent civilians.'

"Beginning in the 1980s the highly secretive FRU was sent into Northern Ireland to recruit and train double agents to work inside the paramilitary groups," writes Michael S. Rose.

"The FRU combated IRA terrorism by the use of paid informers, blackmail, ambushes, and other methods not approved by the Geneva Convention. In the worst case, British officers decided that in cases when it would be difficult to bring suspected IRA terrorists to justice by legitimate means, the FRU would enlist outlawed guerilla groups that possessed both the desire and the means to murder the IRA men. According to Stevens Three, the FRU assisted Protestant terrorists in carrying out what were, in effect, proxy assassinations of Catholics. In order to forge such alliances, the British officers had to overlook the fact that the interests of the Protestant death squads were not those of the United Kingdom and its government."



The FRU was further exposed by former member turned whistleblower Kevin Fulton.

Fulton worked for the FRU for much of his career as he was infiltrating the IRA. In his role as a British FRU agent inside the IRA, he was told to 'do anything' to win the confidence of the terrorist group. Fulton Told the Sunday Herald:

"I mixed explosive and I helped develop new types of bombs. I moved weapons. If you ask me, 'Did I kill anyone?' then I will say 'no'. But if you ask me if the materials I handled killed anyone, then I will have to say that some of the things I helped develop did kill.

I reiterate, my handlers knew everything I did. I was never told not to do something that was discussed. How can you pretend to be a terrorist and not act like one? You can't. You've got to do what they do. The people I was with were hard-hitters. They did a lot of murders. If I couldn't be any good to them, then I was no use to the army either. I had to do what the man standing next to me did.

I broke the law seven days a week and my handlers knew that. They knew that I was making bombs and giving them to other members of the IRA and they did nothing about it. If everything I touched turned to shit then I would have been dead. The idea was that the only way to beat the enemy was to penetrate the enemy and be the enemy. At the time I'd no problem with this way of thinking."

Fulton revealed that his handlers told him that his operations were 'sanctioned right at the top... this goes the whole way to the Prime Minister. The Prime Minister knows what you are doing.'
Every major IRA bombing in England and Northern Ireland has had the fingerprints of the British government and the FRU all over it.



The August 1998 Omagh bombing, which killed 29 people, was known ahead of time by the security services and yet the bomb team wasn't intercepted. The reason? One of the members of the bomb squad was working for army intelligence and MI5. The bombing was allowed to go ahead.

Kevin Fulton claims that he phoned a warning to his RUC handlers 48 hours before the Omagh bombing that the Real IRA was planning an attack and gave details of one of the bombing team and the man's car registration.

Documents, lodged as part of a court action being taken against the British government by a disgruntled military intelligence agent, also reveled that an FRU major was the officer who was the handler of the British army's most infamous agent inside the IRA -- a man codenamed Stakeknife.

Stakeknife is one of Belfast's leading Provisionals. His military handlers allowed him to carry out large numbers of terrorist murders in order to protect his cover within the IRA.
The London Observer further revealed some of the methods employed by the FRU in Northern Ireland, including the “human bomb” technique, which involved “forcing civilians to drive vehicles laden with explosives into army checkpoints”.

This throws a great deal of light on at least one reported incident in Iraq just over a year ago where British SAS agents, dressed in Arab garb and head dress, were caught attempting to stage a terror attack.

The soldiers drove a car towards a group of Iraq police and began firing. According to the Basra governor Mohammed al-Waili, one policeman was shot dead and another was injured.
Early reports cited as originating from BBC World Service radio stated that the car used contained explosives.

In light of this it is pertinent to ask the question, are civilians in Iraq being killed as "legitimate targets"?

We have previously covered the Iraq "order out of chaos" or "strategy of tension" theories in great detail, citing Pentagon documents, esteemed researchers and the testimony of Congressmen and Ambassadors.



All agree that it is entirely plausible to suggest that the US and British governments are operating an underlying strategy which serves to keep the country mired in turmoil to justify the continued presence of occupational forces.

In many cases the evidence suggests that the armed forces role is to prod terrorist cells into action, thus exposing them to "quick-response" attacks. The FRU revelations of recruiting, training and equippingterrorists in Iraq is thus telling.

An even more startling question comes to mind, are everyday ground troops being killed in attacks that their higher ups either have extensive knowledge of or have actually coordinated themselves?

Recently there have been reports of US soldiers being killed by insurgents wearing American military uniforms. Iraqi officials said the gunmen disguised their intent with uniforms, American flak jackets, guns and a convoy of at least seven GMC sport utility vehicles, which are usually used by American officials in Iraq.

It is possible that insurgents may have been able to lay their hands on a couple of uniforms, but where did they get a whole convey of vehicles from?

Further interesting light is thrown on this topic when one considers that the explosives being used in many roadside bombs and car bomb attacks in Iraq have been proven to be developed using advance technology from photographic flash units, which were employed by the IRA some 15 years ago after Irish terrorists were given advice by British agents.

Kevin Fulton has again provided vital information on this, revealing how MI5 helped to buy bomb parts and technology in the US which were subsequently used by the FRU in Northern Ireland and have now found their way into the hands of Iraqi resistance fighters.

"In late 1993 and early 1994, I went to America with officers from MI5, the FRU and RUC special branch. They had already sourced the transmitters and receivers in New York following liaison with their counterparts in the FBI," Fulton told the Sunday Tribune in June, 2002. Fulton's trip was confirmed by the FBI, according to Matthew Teague, writing for the Atlantic. The Independent on Sunday "has also spoken to a republican who was a senior IRA member in the early 1990s. He confirmed that Mr. Fulton had introduced the IRA to the new technology and that the IRA shared this with 'like-minded organizations abroad.'"

There can be no more clearer evidence that our special forces are recruiting, training and arming the Iraqi insurgents.

What's more, in an attempt to shift the blame away from British and US special forces, the US government has attempted to pin the blame for the use of this advance infra-red bomb technology on Iran:
"According to U.S. military figures, 198 American and British soldiers have been killed, and more than 600 wounded by advanced explosive devices manufactured in Iran and smuggled in through the southern marshes and along the Tigris River. Attempts to disrupt these networks, combined with the decision to send a second aircraft carrier to the Persian Gulf as a warning to Iran, significantly raises the stakes, according to former Assistant Secretary of State Martin Indyk."

So all in all here we have clear evidence of Britain and the US recruiting terrorists in Iraq, training them, providing explosives and advanced detonating technology and then blaming the attacks on Iran, thus raising the possibilities of widening the war across the Iranian border.

The FRU is, as previously stated, a wing of the SAS. A cursory look into some of the covert activities of the SAS, along with the equivalent Delta forces in the US, involving terrorist groups again reveals the fact that the British and US establishments are not engaged in fighting a war on terror, they are perpetuating the terror as part of their overall agenda.

- British and American special forces notoriously paved the way for an influx of radical Islamic mujahideen fighters and arms into the Balkans in the early nineties and trained them in order to counter Serbian forces during the Bosnian conflict.
- The SAS, under a joint strategic directive of MI6 and the US Defence Intelligence Agency, also later notoriously trained Kosovo Liberation Army terrorists in the Balkans in the mid to late nineties. Several investigations corroborated this.
- The KLA was known to be heavy infiltrated at this time by "Al Qaeda" or mujahideen fighters associated with Osama Bin Laden who had declared a "global war on the US". It was even alleged that Bin Laden had directly financed the group, yet the US and Britain still went ahead and covertly trained the KLA.

- The KLA was then used to increase ethnic tensions and further destabilize the region, just as is happening now in Iraq. Attacks by the KLA were used to justify Western intervention in the Balkans.
- There is also extensive evidence to suggest that British and US special forces have helped create, support and train Albanian terror cells from which a great deal of the KLA finances are derived.

The activities of the FRU in Iraq need to be investigated immediately. We have a branch of the military that is operating above the law and outside of the Geneva convention within a theatre of war. Moreover this unit has an extremely dirty past that involves carrying out terrorist atrocities and blaming them on persons or groups it wishes to see removed.

The driving agenda in Iraq is to set down permanent bases and dominate the middle east from there. Thus the war is allowed to rage on to keep our forces there.

The FRU's past activities also clearly reveal that the British government is not engaged in a real war on terror, they use the vehicle of terrorism to steer the greater agenda of conquer and control where ever they see fit. The Delta forces of the US work in direct collusion with this wing of the SAS towards the same goal.

http://infowars.net/articles/february2007/050207FRU.htm

Ulster on the Euphrates
The Anglo-American Dirty War in Iraq

By Chris Floyd
02/13/07 "ICH" -- -- Imagine a city torn by sectarian strife. Competing death squads roam the streets; terrorists stage horrific attacks. Local authority is distrusted and weak; local populations protect the extremists in their midst, out of loyalty or fear. A bristling military occupation exacerbates tensions at every turn, while offering prime targets for bombs and snipers. And behind the scenes, in a shadow world of double-cross and double-bluff, covert units of the occupying power run agents on both sides of the civil war, countenancing -- and sometimes directing -- assassinations, terrorist strikes, torture sessions, and ethnic cleansing.

Is this a portrait of Belfast during "The Troubles" in Northern Ireland? Or a picture of Baghdad today? It is both; and in both cases, one of Britain's most secret – and most criminally compromised – military units has plied its trade in the darkness, "turning" and controlling terrorist killers in a dangerous bid to wring actionable intelligence from blood and betrayal. And America's covert soldiers are right there with them, working side-by-side with their British comrades in the aptly named "Task

Force Black," the UK's Sunday Telegraph reports.

Last week, the right-wing, pro-war paper published an early valentine to the "Joint Support Group," the covert unit whose bland name belies its dramatic role at the center of the Anglo-American "dirty war" in Iraq. In gushing, lavish, uncritical prose that could have been (and perhaps was) scripted by the unit itself, the Telegraph lauded the team of secret warriors as "one of the Coalition's most effective and deadly weapons in the fight against terror," running "dozens of Iraqi double-agents," including "members of terrorist groups."

What the story fails to mention is the fact that in its Ulster incarnation, the JSG – then known as the Force Research Unit (FRU) – actively colluded in the murder of at least 15 civilians by Loyalist deaths squads, and an untold number of victims killed, maimed and tortured by the many Irish Republican Army double-agents controlled by the unit. What's more, the man who commanded the FRU during the height of its depredations – Lt. Col. Gordon Kerr – is in Baghdad now, heading the hugger-mugger Special Reconnaissance Regiment (SRR), a large counter-terrorism force made up of unnamed "existing assets" from the glory days in Northern Ireland and elsewhere.

This despite the fact that a 10-year, $100 million investigation by Britain's top police officer, Lord Stevens, confirmed in 2003 that the Kerr-led FRU "sanctioned killings" through "institutionalized collusion" with both Protestant and Catholic militias during the 1980s and 1990s. Stevens sent dossiers of evidence against Kerr and 20 other security apparatchiks to the Blair government's Director of Public Prosecutions, in the expectation that the fiery Scotsman and the others would be put on trial.

But instead prosecuting Kerr, Blair promoted him: first to a plum assignment as British military attaché in Beijing – effectively the number two man in all of UK military intelligence, as Scotland's Sunday Herald notes – then with the SRR posting to Baghdad, where Kerr and his former FRU mates now apply the "methods developed on the mean streets of Ulster during the Troubles," as the Telegraph breathlessly relates.

The Telegraph puff piece is naturally coy about revealing these methods, beyond the fact that, as in Ireland, the JSG uses "a variety of inducements ranging from blackmail to bribes" to turn Iraqi terrorists into Coalition agents. So to get a better idea of the techniques employed by the group in Baghdad, we must return to those "mean streets of Ulster" and the unit's reign of terror and collusion there, which has been thoroughly documented not only by the exhaustive Stevens inquiries, but also in a remarkable series of investigative reports by the Sunday Herald's Neil Mackay, and in extensive stories by the BBC, the Guardian, the Independent, the Times and others.

We will also see how the operations of the JSG and "Task Force Black" dovetail with U.S. efforts to apply the lessons of its own dirty wars – such as the "Salvador Option" – to Iraq, as well as long-running Bush Administration initiatives to arm and fund "friendly" militias while infiltrating terrorist groups in order to "provoke them into action." It is indeed a picture painted in black, a glimpse at the dark muck that lies beneath the high-flown rhetoric about freedom and civilization forever issuing from the lips of the war leaders.

II. Whacking for the Peelers

Gregory Burns had a problem. He was one of Gordon Kerr's FRU informers planted deep inside the IRA, along with two of his friends, Johnny Dignam and Aidan Starrs. But as Mackay noted in a February 2003 story, the already-partnered Burns had acquired a girlfriend on the side, Margaret Perry, 26, a "civilian" Catholic with no paramilitary ties. Forbidden fruit is sweet, of course – but pillow talk is dangerous for an inside man. "Burns didn't keep his mouth shut and [Perry] found out he was working for British intelligence," an FRU officer told Mackay. "He tried to convince her he was a double-agent the IRA had planted in the [British] army – but she didn't buy it."

Burns called his FRU handlers and asked to come in from the cold. He'd been compromised, he said, and now he and his friends needed to get out, with new identities, relocation, good jobs – the usual payoff for trusted agents when the jig was up. But Kerr refused: "He said [Burns] should silence Perry," the FRU man told Mackay. Burns, panicking at thought of the IRA's horrific retributions against informers, insisted: he would have to kill the woman if they didn't bring him in, he told Kerr. Again Kerr refused.

And so Burns arranged a meeting with his lover, to "talk over" the situation. His friends, Aidan and Johnny, volunteered to drive her there: "On the way, they pulled into a forest, beat her to death and buried her in a shallow grave," Mackay notes. Two years later, when her body was found, the IRA put two and two together – and slowly tortured Burns and his two friends to death, after first extracting copious amounts of information about British intelligence operations in Ireland.

'In Kerr's eyes, Burns just wasn't important enough to resettle," the FRU source told the Sunday Herald. "So we ended up with four unnecessary deaths and the compromising of British army intelligence officers, which ultimately put soldiers' lives at risk. To Kerr, it was always a matter of the ends justifying the means."

Then again, Kerr could well afford to sacrifice a few informers here and there to the wrath of the IRA's dreaded "security unit" – because his own prize double agent was the head of that security unit. Codenamed "Stakeknife," Kerr's man presided over, and sometimes administered, the grisly torture-

murders of up to 50 men during his tenure in the IRA's upper ranks. The victims included other British double agents who were sacrificed in order to protect Stakeknife's cover, as the Guardian and many other UK papers reported when the agent's work was revealed in 2003. ("Stakeknife" was later identified in the press as Alfredo Scappaticci – an Irishman despite the Italian name, although he continues to deny the charge.)

The FRU also "knowingly allowed soldiers, [police] officers and civilians to die at the hands of IRA bombers in order to protect republican double agents," the Sunday Herald's investigations found. As Mackay reports: "FRU sources said around seven police and army personnel died as a result of military intelligence allowing IRA bombs to be placed during Kerr's time in command of the FRU. They estimate that three civilians also died this way, with casualties in the hundreds."

But some of the worst excesses came from the FRU's handling of operatives on the other side, in the fiercely pro-British Protestant militia the Ulster Defense Association (UDA). Here, among the Loyalists, Kerr's top double agent was Brian Nelson, who became head of intelligence for the UDA. As John Ware put it in the Guardian: "Kerr regarded Nelson as his jewel in the crown... For the next three years [from 1987], Nelson colluded with murder gangs to shoot IRA suspects. Month after month, armed and masked men crashed into homes. Sometimes they got the wrong address or shot the wrong person."

Such as Gerald Slane, a 27-year-old Belfast man shot down in front of his three children. A gun had been found dumped on his property; this, and his Catholicism, was enough to get him assassinated at the order of Kerr's man Nelson. Afterwards, it was found that Slane had no IRA connections.

Another "wrong person" killed by the FRU's agents was the Belfast attorney Pat Finucane, who was shot 14 times in front of his wife and children. Finucane was a civil rights activist who had defended both Catholics and Protestants, but was considered an IRA sympathizer by Loyalists – and a thorn in the side by British authorities. He was killed at Nelson's order by a fellow FRU informer in the UDA, Ken Barrett, who was convicted of the murder but freed last year after as part of an amnesty program in the Northern Ireland peace process. Barrett was unapologetic about his FRU "wetwork" on Finucane. "The peelers [authorities] wanted him whacked," he told a BBC documentary team after his release. "We whacked him and that is the end of the story."

Kerr gave Nelson packages of intelligence files to help facilitate the assassination of UDA targets, including at least four "civilians" with no IRA ties, the Stevens inquiry found. The FRU also obtained "restriction orders" from other British security and military units in Northern Ireland, whereby they would pull their forces from an area when Kerr's UDA agents were going to make a hit there, allowing the killers to get in and get out without hindrance, investigator Nick Davies reports.

Yet the FRU was wary of sharing its own intelligence with other security services – which was the ostensible reason for running the double-agents in the first place. Instead, Kerr engaged in fierce turf wars with other agencies, while "stovepiping" much of his intelligence to the top circles of the UK government, including the cabinet-level Intelligence Committee chaired by then-Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher. Indeed, when Nelson was finally exposed and brought to trial on five counts of conspiracy to commit murder, Kerr testified in his behalf, noting for the court that Nelson's intelligence "product and his reporting was passed through the intelligence community and at a high level, and from that point of view he has to be considered a very important agent."

As one FRU man told Mackay: "Under Kerr's command...the mindset was one of 'the right people would be allowed to live and wrong people should die.'"

This is the "mindset" now operating in the heart of the Green Zone in Baghdad, where the JSG is carrying out – we are told in glowing terms – precisely the same mission it had in Ulster. a unit which has allowed its agents to torture, murder and commit acts of terrorism, including actions that killed local civilians and the soldiers and intelligence operatives of their own country.

III. The White House Green Light

Of course, Kerr and his Baghdad black-op crew are not alone in the double-dealing world of Iraqi counterinsurgency. The Pentagon's ever-expanding secret armies are deeply enmeshed in such efforts as well. As Sy Hersh has reported ("The Coming Wars," New Yorker, Jan. 24, 2005), after his re-election in 2004, George W. Bush signed a series of secret presidential directives that authorized the Pentagon to run virtually unrestricted covert operations, including a reprise of the American-backed, American-trained death squads employed by authoritarian regimes in Central and South America during the Reagan Administration, where so many of the Bush faction cut their teeth – and made their bones.

"Do you remember the right-wing execution squads in El Salvador?" a former high-level intelligence official said to Hersh. "We founded them and we financed them. The objective now is to recruit locals in any area we want. And we aren't going to tell Congress about it." A Pentagon insider added: "We're going to be riding with the bad boys." Another role model for the expanded dirty war cited by Pentagon sources, said Hersh, was Britain's brutal repression of the Mau Mau in Kenya during the 1950s, when British forces set up concentration camps, created their own terrorist groups to confuse and discredit the insurgency, and killed thousands of innocent civilians in quashing the uprising.

Bush's formal greenlighting of the death-squad option built upon an already securely-established base,

part of a larger effort to turn the world into a "global free-fire zone" for covert operatives, as one top Pentagon official told Hersh. For example, in November 2002 a Pentagon plan to infiltrate terrorist groups and "stimulate" them into action was uncovered by William Arkin, then writing for the Los Angeles Times. The new unit, the "Proactive, Pre-emptive Operations Group," was described in the Pentagon documents as "a super-Intelligence Support Activity" that brings "together CIA and military covert action, information warfare, intelligence and cover and deception."

Later, in August 2004, then deputy Pentagon chief Paul Wolfowitz appeared before Congress to ask for $500 million to arm and train non-governmental "local militias" to serve as U.S. proxies for "counter-insurgency and "counterterrorist" operations in "ungoverned areas" and hot spots around the world, Agence France Presse (and virtually no one else) reported at the time. These hired paramilitaries were to be employed in what Wolfowitz called an "arc of crisis" that just happened to stretch across the oil-bearing lands and strategic pipeline routes of Central Asia, the Middle East, Africa and South America.

By then, the Bush Administration had already begun laying the groundwork for an expanded covert war in the hot spot of Iraq. In November 2003, it created a "commando squad" drawn from the sectarian militias of five major Iraqi factions, as the Washington Post reported that year. Armed, funded and trained by the American occupation forces, and supplied with a "state-of-the-art command, control and communications center" from the Pentagon, the new Iraqi commandos were loosed on the then-nascent Iraqi insurgency – despite the very prescient fears of some U.S. officials "that various Sunni or Shiite factions could eventually use the service to secretly undermine their political competitors," as the Post noted.

And indeed, in early 2005 – not long after Bush's directives loosed the "Salvador Option" on Iraq – the tide of death-squad activity began its long and bloody rise to the tsunami-like levels we see today.



Ironically, the first big spike of mass torture-murders, chiefly in Sunni areas at the time, coincided with "Operation Lightning," a much ballyhooed effort by American and Iraqi forces to "secure" Baghdad. The operation featured a mass influx of extra troops into the capital; dividing the city into manageable sectors, then working through them one by one; imposing hundreds of checkpoints to lock down all insurgent movements; and establishing a 24-hour presence of security and military forces in troubled neighborhoods, the Associated Press reported in May 2005. In other words, it was almost exactly the same plan now being offered as Bush's "New Way Forward," the controversial "surge."

But the "Lightning" fizzled in a matter of weeks, and the death squads grew even bolder. Brazen daylight raids by "men dressed in uniforms" of Iraqi police or Iraqi commandos or other Iraqi security agencies swept up dozens of victims at a time. For months, U.S. "advisers" to Iraqi security agencies – including veterans of the original "Salvador Option" – insisted that these were Sunni insurgents in stolen threads, although many of the victims were Sunni civilians. Later, the line was changed: the chief culprits were now "rogue elements" of the various sectarian militias that had "infiltrated" Iraq's institutions.

But as investigative reporter Max Fuller has pointed out in his detailed examination of information buried in reams of mainstream news stories and public Pentagon documents, the vast majority of atrocities then attributed to "rogue" Shiite and Sunni militias were in fact the work of government-controlled commandos and "special forces," trained by Americans, "advised" by Americans and run largely by former CIA assets. As Fuller puts it: "If there are militias in the Ministry of Interior, you can be sure that they are militias that stand to attention whenever a U.S. colonel enters the room." And perhaps a British lieutenant colonel as well

With the Anglo-American coalition so deeply embedded in dirty war – infiltrating terrorist groups, "stimulating" them into action," protecting "crown jewel" double-agents no matter what the cost, "riding with the bad boys," greenlighting the "Salvador Option" – it is simply impossible to determine the genuine origin of almost any particular terrorist outrage or death squad atrocity in Iraq. All of these operations take place in the shadow world, where terrorists are sometimes government operatives and vice versa, and where security agencies and terrorist groups interpenetrate in murky thickets of collusion and duplicity. This moral chaos leaves "a kind of blot/To mark the full-fraught man and best indued/With some suspicion," as Shakespeare's Henry V says.

What's more, the "intelligence" churned out by this system is inevitably tainted by the self-interest, mixed motives, fear and criminality of those who provide it. The ineffectiveness of this approach can be seen in the ever-increasing, many-sided civil war that is tearing Iraq apart. If these covert operations really are intended to quell the violence, they clearly have had the opposite effect. If they have some other intention, the pious defenders of civilization – who approve these activities with promotions, green lights and unlimited budgets – aren't telling.
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Pentagon "Cracking Down" on "Salvador Option" Death Squads It Created

Kurt Nimmo, Wednesday February 14th 2007, 9:14 pm

How soon we forget, that is if we noticed in the first place.

It was January 14, 2005, when Michael Hirsh and John Barry, writing for Newsweek, told us about the possibility of the Pentagon implementing the so-called "Salvador Option" in Iraq. Following the "model" of the "Salvador Option," dispatching death squads "to hunt down and kill rebel leaders and sympathizers," as was prosecuted under Reagan in El Salvador, "one Pentagon proposal would send Special Forces teams to advise, support and possibly train Iraqi squads, most likely hand-picked Kurdish Peshmerga fighters and Shiite militiamen, to target Sunni insurgents and their sympathizers, even across the border into Syria, according to military insiders familiar with the discussions."

Hirsh and Barry characterize the neocon version of the "Salvador Option"—more accurately described as the Phoenix program refashioned—as little more than idle chatter bouncing around in the deep recesses of the Pentagon, when in fact this murderous "option" was signed off on back in October, 2004, "in a single paragraph in an 800-page defense authorization bill," according to Stephen R. Shalom, citing Douglas Jehl and Eric Schmitt or the New York Times.

If you read USA Today this morning, you would come away with the impression Iraq's Shi'ites—most notably the politically expedient and oft-demonized Muqtada al-Sadr and his al-Mahdi Army—came up with the idea to hunt down and slaughter Sunni insurgents, supporters, and obviously no small number of innocent bystanders all on their lonesome.

In addition, we are told, al-Sadr's Shi'a followers are attacking U.S. forces in Iraq with IEDs manufactured from Iranian parts. "The new Iraqi-U.S. security plan launched this month focuses on disarming the radical Shiite cleric's Mahdi Army, which the U.S. military accuses of setting roadside bombs, infiltrating government ministries and conducting mass kidnappings and murders. Several Mahdi Army leaders have been arrested in recent weeks," reports USA Today, a rather daffy declaration, as Iraqi Shi'ites "infiltrating" a puppet government consisting primarily of fellow Shi'ites is sort of like Texan farmers infiltrating the Texas Farm Bureau.

Of course, according to the neocons, there are good Shi'ites and bad Shi'ites—the good Shi'ites are part of the Iraqi National Assembly, "elected" by "referendum" held at gunpoint—and now that "civil war" (engineered social and ethnic chaos) has broken out, it is time to send out the cavalry—consisting largely of kids from Nebraska and Appalachia, who thought signing up would get them out of a life of flipping burgers at McDonalds—and take care of the bad guys, most of whom live in teeming Baghdad ghettos.

Never mind the vast majority of Americans in Iraq are killed by the Sunni resistance, organized by elements of the former Ba'ath party—not al-Sadr, consistently characterized as a miscreant and Iranian puppet dancing on a short string.

Searching Google, one is hard pressed to locate news stories of Shi'ites killing U.S. troops, although there is an appreciable number of articles detailing the slaughter of Shi'ites, most recently when a supposed Shi'a sect was wiped out in Najaf, apparently with an ease akin to shooting fish in a barrel.

As for the "ancient animosities" between Sunni and Shi'a—said to be at the root of the carnage in Iraq, never mind the neocons have methodically reduced the place to an intolerable radioactive ruin—we are told, by none other than the demented columnist and resident Islamophobe over at the CIA's favorite newspaper, Charles Krauthammer, that "Iraqis were given their freedom, and yet many have chosen civil war."

For the Muslim- and Arab-hating neocons, it is "religious prejudices, ancient wounds, social resentments and tribal antagonisms" at the base of the violence, not the social chaos unleashed on them by the United States. And "who gets the blame for the rivers of blood?" sniffs Krauthammer. "You can always count on some to find the blame in America."

Damn straight, Charlie—and rightfully so.

Meanwhile, as U.S. troops kick in the doors of Shi'ite homes, "virtually unopposed," as Forbes informs us, "in the opening phase of the long-awaited Baghdad security crackdown," it is said the "anti-U.S. cleric al-Sadr" has "fled to Iran," according to the Associated Press.

Last month, unable to arrest al-Sadr, "Iraqi forces" settled instead for Sheik Abdul-Hadi al-Darraji, al-Sadr's media director in Baghdad, accusing him "of having ties with the commanders of so-called death squads" (see above), reports the Associated Press. A few weeks later, "Iraqi and U.S. security forces" arrested Deputy Minister Hakim al-Zamili, described as an "al-Sadr loyalist" and the "first, visible big fish," according to the Los Angeles Times.

It should be noted this "high-level Iraqi official" was connected to the Health Ministry. According to Ken Silverstein, writing for Harper's Magazine, Health Minister Abdul Mutalib Mohammed Ali is associated with Baqir Jabr al-Zubeidi, the former Interior Minister now serving as the Finance Minister, the latter accused of "institutional responsibility for violence committed by the death squads," and described as "merely the most ruthless of a class of Shiite leaders who have sought to engineer Shiite dominance behind the scenes, at times with direct U.S. sponsorship." As it turns out, Baqir Jabr al-Zubeidi "ran SCIRI's local office in Syria, where he coordinated relations with other anti-Saddam exile groups" before the invasion. It is common knowledge SCIRI "has a long and stormy relationship with the Pentagon and the CIA," writes Maria Tomchick.

Counting on our persistent amnesia, or lack of attention altogether, the Pentagon expects us to believe, as the miscreant Krauthammer expects us to believe, that Iraq's death squads are a homegrown phenomenon, when in fact there is plenty of evidence they are trained and coordinated by the Pentagon. It is not merely happenstance or "ancient animosities" driving the current wave of sectarian slaughter in Iraq. As Max Fuller reported last November, al-Sadr's al-Mahdi Army has worked closely with Interior Ministry commandos, mostly notably in Balad in October.

Silverstein would have us believe the rise of Shi'a death squads reveals "American blindness, incompetence, and cynicism," when in fact it reveals a concerted effort to destroy the country, with the help of Shi'a militias, apparently including on occasion al-Sadr's faithful, myopically following their own anti-Sunni (or rather anti-Ba'athists) agenda.

The Silence of the Lambs? A Cry to Raise Our Voices!

Proof of US orchestration of Death Squads Killings in Iraq

Testimony of Iraqi torture victim confirms the presence of US personnel at the infamous Jadiriyah bunker

(Max Fuller 09 March 2007)

- **Website**: ***www.cryingwolf.deconstructingiraq.org.uk***

Note 1: On Sectarianism

Note 2: On Genocide

Probably everyone remembers the discovery of the Jadiriyah detention facility in November 2005. US troops were reported to have uncovered the prison in their hunt for a missing person, only to discover some 170 detainees in horrific conditions, many of them clearly the victims of obscene tortures. Although it was admitted that the facility belonged to the interior ministry and that the detainees were held by a secretive interior ministry force known as the Special Investigations Unit, the story was quickly shuffled away as yet another example of the work of Shiite militiamen, in this instance, as was the vogue at that time, the Badr Brigade[i]. Myriad promises were forthcoming both from the US and Iraqi governments that investigations would be rapidly carried out and better supervision would in future be applied to Iraqi-run detention facilities (for instance the Iraqi government assured the world that a ministerial level investigation would rapidly be carried out, while US officials promised a legal team to go through the detainees' files and a US embassy spokesman stated that Justice Department and FBI officers would provide technical assistance).

Of course, given the scale of the abuse (flayings, burnings, drillings etc) and the proximity of the perpetrators to the Iraqi government (by dint of working for the Interior Ministry as well as by any possible Badr-SCIRI links) and to the US occupation which had, after all, established them (as numerous reports have amply documented, eg Knight Ridder, 9 May 2005), such investigations were grossly less than what was urgently required – a full and public criminal investigation by independent international agencies. In the event, even these limited promises came to nothing, as the UN Human Rights Office in Iraq recently highlighted. What we have actually seen is neither investigation nor prosecutions, despite the fact that Jadiriyah lies at the heart of the state of fear that Iraq undeniably now is.

In October last year I had the privilege to interview one of the victims of that terrible abuse, the distinguished former Professor of Pedagogy at Baghdad University Tareq Samarree, who had been seized from his home in March 2005 by plain-clothed interior ministry personnel without charge. Professor Samarree, who provided a horrific first-hand account of the torture that he had suffered as well as details of others who had died and of the disappearance of his son within the Iraqi detention system, never had sight of any hint of judicial process nor any access to the outside world. What made Professor Samarree's story most striking were the details of his release. Professor Samarree's physical condition was so bad when the American soldiers discovered the facility that he, along with around a dozen other detainees, was instantly taken to a local hospital. Here, he and his companions remained without access to lawyers, journalists, officials or even a telephone. In fact, it quickly became clear that these victims of torture were to be returned to Iraqi detention. Professor Samarree, another of whose sons lives in the United States, was fortunate to be able to persuade an American solider to take pity on him and assist him and two of his companions to escape. The last words the soldier said to Professor Samarree were 'Run, run. Don't look back!'

Within days Professor Samarree had arranged for himself and his family to flee the country. He is now in Europe, where he is claiming political asylum.

The full details of Professor Samarree's story and a detailed account of the US-built Iraqi intelligence apparatus are contained in the article Ghosts of Jadiriyah, published by the B*Russell*s Tribunal. It should be noted that the story was offered on the one-year anniversary of discovery of the Jadiryah facility to a range of mainstream media publications, including New Yorker, New Statesman, the Independent, The Big Issue, as well as to the radical left publication Z Mag. Of them all, only the New Statesmen and Z Mag were courteous enough even to reply to affirm their rejection. It seemed that Professor Samarree's remarkable story and any further interest in Jadiriyah were simply off the agenda.

But Jadiriyah, with its ghosts and its horror, will not go away.

On 7 February 2007 another former inmate from Jadiriyah, Abbas Z Abid, presented his sworn testimony at the international peace conference in Kuala Lumpur. Like Professor Samarree's, his description of the torture that he and others underwent is almost too harrowing to bear. What sets his testimony apart and completes our understanding of the grim world of Iraq's secret prisons are the dates of his incarceration. Mr Abid, an electrical engineer from Fallujah who was the Chief Engineer in Baghdad's Science and Technology Ministry, was arrested in August 2005**, but was not released until October 2006**. That means that Mr Abid, like Dr Samarree, was held when the American soldiers raided the facility, but his ordeal did not end there. In fact, not only does Mr Abid describe the ongoing tortures that he was repeatedly subjected **to after the US intervention**, as well as describing the tortures that continued to be inflicted on fellow inmates, including the use of Black and Decker drills and other power tools (Mr Abid names eight fellow detainees who died from their injuries), but Mr Abid states that '**American troops have visited the prison many times** and therefore cannot deny the existence of such a prison'.

The implications of these two testimonies as well as the absence of independent and public scrutiny are obvious. The Occupation has done nothing at all to halt abuse at the Interior Ministry's network of secret prisons or curtail in any way the culture of impunity in which they exist. And lets be absolutely clear what we are talking about here. **This is as close as we can get to the tide of sectarian violence sweeping Iraq**, whose victims are almost invariably arrested by Interior Ministry personnel, who are then horribly tortured within Interior Ministry prisons and whose bodies finally surface in abandoned lots, are dredged from rivers, are buried in shallow graves in the desert or left as human detritus around sewage works (Former human rights chief in Iraq John Pace stated that the majority of killings were being carried out by groups under the control of the Interior Ministry, *Independent*, 26 February 2006, while the Iraqi Organisation for Follow-up and Monitoring in Iraq found that in 92% of some 3498 cases of extrajudicial killing, the victims had been arrested by Interior Ministry forces). Such would undoubtedly have been the final fate of Professor Samarree and Mr Abid's hapless fellow detainees.

Of course the Americans have always been aware of the existence of this and other horrific dungeons within Interior Ministry facilities. How could they not be? They set them up and continue to operate from the same facilities! And for any who would question the validity or Mr Abid's testimony that American forces were regular visitors, his story is confirmed by Solomon Moore writing in the *Los Angeles Times* (9 July 2006), who stated that the US military had been at the facility before the November raid! And the same happened in Basra. After it was revealed by the Plaid Cymru MP Adam Price that British trained policemen had tortured prisoners to death with drills, we discovered, through the *New York Times* (!!), that American intelligence officers had been working alongside them at the Jamiyat police station, where they passed on names of suspects knowing that those suspects would end up as the victims of death squads. That is their modus operandi and it is duplicated by British military intelligence units, like the Joint Support Group, who brought their nefarious experience from

Northern Ireland (where, as Chris Floyd has recently documented, they orchestrated sectarian murder through the Ulster Defence Association) straight to Iraq. Thus in Basra we find a paramilitary death squad outfit called the Revenge of God (Thar Allah) nurtured and protected by the British, linked to police intelligence and given control of nightly curfews, despite its boasts of killing members of the former state (see Ghosts of Jadiriyah for a more complete account)!

Since the mainstream western media will not hear such voices as Professor Samarree and Mr Abid, it is absolutely beholden on every decently minded individual as well as every organisation that opposes the illegal occupation of Iraq to demand the truth and bring an end to this monstrous culture of impunity. Jean Paul Sartre noted that the American assault on Vietnam was not only an attack against that nation, but an act of violence directed against the whole of humanity. If we are to have any hope of rescuing our own collective humanity, we must raise our voices to bring an end to the screaming from Iraq.

Two important notes

Note 1: On Sectarianism

The cherished western mainstream media notion, undoubtedly nurtured by false flag covert warfare and so-called psyops, that Iraq has fragmented into a state of intercommunal sectarian civil war is the biggest single impediment to understanding the role of the Anglo-US Occupation in the thousands upon thousands of extrajudicial killings taking place in Iraq.

The testimonies of Professor Samarree and Mr Abid shed some futher light on just how far we can see sectarianism as a factor in Iraq's violence. Both accounts describe hearing a language that they believe to be Farsi, as well as, variously, images of Shiite saints and mobile ring tones with Iranian songs. Dr Samarree even states with a high degree of confidence that the head of the Badr Organisation, Hadi al-Amery, attended one of his interrogation sessions.[ii]

There is no reason to doubt their testimonies. In fact, as newspapers have revealed, and I have documented on multiple occasions, the Badr Brigade/Organisation was among the major political parties in exile from whom the CIA recruited the core of the new intelligence apparatus, an organisation which started out with the innocuous title of the Collection Management and Analysis Directorate (CMAD), a title which masked the fact that in reality it was producing what amounted to death lists to be targeted by its paramilitary wing in conjunction with US (and UK) special forces (See Ghosts of Jadiriyah for a detailed discussion).

That such parties are running at least some of the worst detention facilities (others are undoubtedly run by Kurdish groups in the north of Iraq) is therefore not surprising and of course their members at every level of responsibility should face justice. But more instructive are their demonstrable links with

the Occupation, which I have sought to document. It is this intellectual authorship of extrajudicial killing that the Western anti-occupation movement needs to focus on. If the torturers and killers in Jadiriyah were indeed taking their instruction from Iran, as some would hold, then they not only need to prove that, but in the face of concrete evidence that such forces work in close conjunction with the US (see also Diyala: a Laboratory of Civil War?), they also need to prove that the US state is working hand in hand with the Iranian state.

In fact, as Kurt Nimmo has highlighted, we know that the Iranian state is being stitched up in Iraq over fabricated charges of supplying weapons to Shiite groups. As anyone who remembers anything about similar US charges in other theatres of war (such as the Nicaraguan Migs, the Gulf of Tonkin incident etc etc) will remember, they were all made up! As modern military theorists hold, the major part of contemporary warfare is informational - or better stated, disinformational.

Note 2: On Genocide

The distinguished dissident academic Edward Herman, recently wrote a paper entitled Iraq: the Genocide Option in which he argued that the US war in Iraq threatened to become genocidal. He was quite right to point to genocide. With credible figures of over one million Iraqi casualties, another three to four million displaced internally and externally, the total collapse of civic infrastructure and the imminent threat of political disintegration, there must already be a very real question as to whether Iraq continues to exist as a viable nation. To fully substantiate the charge, the only question technically remains establishing intent, although I believe that too is perfectly possible when we consider the statements on partition made by the likes of Leslie Gelb (New York Times 25 November 2003, 1 May 2006).

To make his argument, Herman drew upon two analogies: El Salvador and Vietnam. Whilst explicitly acknowledging the existence of the so-called Salvador Option in Iraq, Herman's argument was that genocide had occurred in Vietnam though the direct application of US force with its implementation of weapons of massive destruction, whereas, in El Salvador, where the US had had to resort to more lightly equipped proxy armies, only mass murder had occurred, which he compared with the Phoenix Programme in Vietnam. With the greatest respect, however, I believe that Herman is understating the terrible impact of the Phoenix Programme, the brutal US-sponsored war in El Salvador and the ongoing Salvador Option in Iraq.

First of all, Herman compares El Salvador's estimated death toll of some 100,000 (which Noam Chomsky describes as the crucifixion of the country) with the several (commonly around three) million estimated victims in Vietnam. Whilst one should not doubt the scale of the horror brought to Vietnam and its tragic ongoing legacy, it should be pointed out that to compare these figures is somewhat misleading. El Salvador has a population of some five million, compared to around 10 times as many

in Vietnam. Thus it would not be unreasonable to suggest that had El Salvador's Salvador Option been carried out in a country as populous as Vietnam, the direct casualties would have totalled around one million, bringing it instantly into the same order of magnitude as Vietnam. In fact, something very much like this under US auspices did take place in Indonesia. Thus, we can see that with an arsenal of much lighter weapons, including a plentiful array of improvised torture devices, a multitude of human lives can be extinguished. In El Salvador this slaughter was meticulously organised by the US through the training and provision of its armed forces, through control of its intelligence departments and through strategically placed advisors at every level of the Salvadoran Armed Forces.

And the results of the US war in El Salvador were the economic subjugation of the country, including dollarisation, with an uncounted human toll in terms of blocked social reform and the entrenchment of poverty. In the sense that the hopes and dreams of emancipation from economic slavery of the poor majority were drowned in rivers of blood, this too was a genocide.

It also seems unduly dismissive to describe the Phoenix Program as only accounting for the deaths of around 40,000 Vietnamese. The point of the Phoenix Programme was that it was a systematic campaign of targeted killing in South Vietnam designed to destroy the leadership of the resistance movements (including the leaders of the unarmed social resistance) and terrorise the population into obedience (as in El Salvador). As such it formed an important tactical contribution to what amounted to a genocidal attack against the Vietnamese, whose aim was to extinguish that people's hope of national development. Nor should the value of the eventual exposure of the Phoenix Program be regarded as insignificant. The effect of this exposure was to give the necessary impetus to closing down the Office of Public Safety (*Supplying Repression*, Institute for Policy Studies, 1981), whose various programmes contributed to the implementation of repressive security apparatuses around the world and certainly added to growing pressure for US withdrawal from Vietnam. We will never know what effect its earlier exposre might have had if more people had been prepared to break the silence.

In his address to the Bertrand Russell Tribunal on Vietnam, Jean Paul Sartre specifically addressed the question of genocide. Sartre argued that the US could conduct genocide in Vietnam not because it had the means, but because its lack of significant economic interests meant that there was nothing to lose and the salutary effect of this lesson in apocalypse would not be lost on other nations bidding for independence.

In Iraq (with its much smaller population) the US has already matched in scale the violence perpetrated on Vietnam and the war goes on, although there is little indication that it has given up its economic interests. Undoubtedly a very great part of this violence is conducted directly by US forces (the extremely credible Lancet study suggests from 30-40%), but, despite surges, that proportion appears to be falling. That leaves perhaps as many as 500,000 violent deaths unattributed to Coalition military action. Herman states that some of these would belong to the Salvador Option, while the bulk

of the others would fall into the pattern that he explicitly describes as large-scale communal civil war manipulated by the US. I think it is vital that we all remember that this inter-communal sectarian warfare still consists of anonymous bombs that target the Shia and which most Iraqis for good reason believe are the work of the occupation and sectarian killings of Sunnis by members of the security forces – along with academics, engineers, lawyers, trade unionists, imams, doctors, teachers and other state functionaries by paramilitary forces operating from the Ministry of the Interior[iii]. This is indeed the application of the Salvador Option and it contributes an essential part of the ongoing genocide in Iraq.

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[i] The charge that the Badr Brigade was responsible for most of acts of sectarian violence through its alleged infiltration of the Interior Ministry Police Commandos was revised almost overnight following the bombing of the Samarra Mosque in February 2006. From that moment on the majority of complaints against Shiite militiamen were levelled against the so-called Mehdi Army associated with Muqtada al Sadr. No explanation has ever been provided as to how such a switch could have come about, especially perplexing given that it was explicitly clear that police units were the primary culprits prior to Samarra.

[ii] The very fact that Mr Abid is able to describe the special attention given to Sunni detainees demonstrates that there were Shiites among the detainees, a fact commonly glossed over. In addition, Mr Abid was neither detained by the Badr Brigade nor the Mehdi Army but by US and Iraqi forces (the Muthana Brigade, which, despite reported reverence for Muqtada al Sadr, continues to host US advisors), before being handed over to the Special Investigation Unit.

[iii] In each of the high profile accounts of supposed sectarian attacks and massacres that have taken place within the last year a detailed examination of the evidence demonstrates that the violence specifically occurred within the context of security operations and/or directly under the noses of Occupation forces. Examples include Operation Knockout in Baquba, the assault on the Adhamiya district of Baghdad, the massacre in the Jihad district of Baghdad, the massacre in Balad and the mass abduction from the Ministry of Education.
http://www.brusselstribunal.org/FullerKillings.htm

Former collaborator discloses details of US-ordered assassinations, sectarian bomb attacks targeting Iraqi civilians

Association of Muslim Scholars in Iraq (AMSI)

May 11, 2006

An Iraqi who asked not to be identified had disclosed some of the US activities such as assassinations and bombings in markets that aim at sparking sectarian fighting among Iraqis so as to facilitate the partition of the country.

He pointed out that he that he worked with the US occupation troops for about two and a half years and then was able to flee from them to an area outside Baghdad where, he hopes, the Americans will not be able to get to him.

The former Iraqi collaborator recalled: "I was a soldier in the Iraqi army in the war of 1991 and during the withdrawal from Kuwait I decided to seek asylum in Saudi Arabia along with dozens of others like me. That was how began the process whereby I was recruited into the American forces, for there were US military committees that chose a number of Iraqis who were willing to volunteer to join them and be transported to America. I was one of those," he said.
The former collaborator went on: "In 1992 I was taken to America, specifically to an island where most of the establishments were military. I was with a number of other Iraqis, one of them the former governor of an-Najaf, 'Adnan adh-Dharfi. We received military training and intense courses in English and in how to carry out tasks like assassination," he recounted.

The former collaborator said that during the 2003 invasion and subsequent war, he was transported back to the interior of Iraq to carry out specific tasks assigned him by the US agencies.

"During the last war that led to the occupation of Iraq," he recalled, "I was with a group of my comrades who had received training in America in how to spread chaos in the ranks of the Iraqi army. We were brought into Iraq across the border from Saudi Arabia. We put on Iraqi army uniforms and out mission was basically to spread rumors among the Iraqis, such as that the American army had already got into such-and-such a city, or that it is on the outskirts of Baghdad and other such things, which were part of the reason for the rapid collapse of the Iraqi forces," he said.

The former collaborator went on: "the unit that I was with settled in the presidential palace in the al-A'zamiyah district. We were allowed to visit our relatives and relations in Baghdad once a month, and so I would go visit my family in 'Madinat as-Sadr' in eastern Baghdad. But after things began to get

worse and the armed men began to shot at everyone leaving the palace, I asked my family to come to the palace every now and then so I could see them. My job was being a guard, but after a time that situation changed and the American occupation forces put me in charge of a group of a unit that carried out assassinations in the streets of Baghdad," he said.

"Our task was to carry out assassinations of individuals. The US occupation army would supply us with their names, pictures, and maps of their daily movements to and from their place of residence and we were supposed to kill the Shi'i, for example, in the al-A'zamiyah, and kill the Sunni in the of 'Madinat as-Sadr', and so on."

"Anyone in the unit who made a mistake was killed. Three members of my team were killed by US occupation forces after they failed to assassinate Sunni political figures in Baghdad. A US force that had been so-ordered eliminated them. That took place two years ago," the former collaborator recalled.

The former collaborator said that the Americans have a unit for "dirty jobs." That unit is a mix of Iraqis, Americans, and foreigners and of the security detachments that are deployed in Baghdad and other Iraqi cities. This unit doesn't only carry out assassinations, but some of them specialize in planting bombs and car bombs in neighborhoods and markets. This unit carries out operations in which wanted people whom the American army does not want killed are arrested.

The former collaborator said that "operations of planting car bombs and blowing up explosives in markets are carried out in various ways, the best-known and most famous among the US troops is placing a bomb inside cars as they are being searched at checkpoints. Another way is to put bombs in the cars during interrogations. After the desired person is summoned to one of the US bases, a bomb is place in his car and he is asked to drive to a police station or a marked for some purpose and there his car blows up."

The testimony of the former collaborator is consistent with some western reports that have disclosed the involvement of US military personnel in bombings that target Iraqi civilians. The British reporter Robert Fisk, AMSI noted, had recently met with Iraqis in Syria concerning such "black operations" carried out by the Americans.

The Egyptian writer and former editor of al-Ahram, Muhammad Hasanayn Haykal, also noted in an interview with al-Jazeera satellite TV that there are mercenaries who practically make up an army second only to the regular US army in Iraq in terms of their numbers and equipment. This force is now called the "Knights of Malta" Haykal said, and they are the cause of many of the attacks that target Iraqi civilians. Haykal noted that there are Iraqis and Lebanese working in the ranks of that force.

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Saving Al Qaeda: Collective Punishment and Curious Policy in the "Surge"

Written by Chris Floyd Wednesday, 11 July 2007

The Bush Administration's hideously named military offensive in Iraq's Diyala province ("Arrowhead Ripper" -- there's a real hearts-and-minds moniker for you) is having the same effect we've seen in all the other many pushes and surges and crackdowns during the botched conquest: killing innocent people, alienating the locals, strengthening the insurgency -- and allowing the ostensible targets of the operation to escape long before the action begins.

Arrowhead Ripper has been tearing through Diyala's capital city, Baquba, since June 18, Inter Press Service reports. The announced goal of the operation is to cleanse the area of "al Qaeda terrorists" -- the term of art now given to anyone who's not down with the Bushist program. Or who just *looks* like they might not be down with the program. Or who just happens to be lying in their bed when Apache helicopters come calling on the village. But just as in the destruction of Fallujah in late November 2004 -- a vast human sacrifice offered to the gods in gratitude for the Leader's re-election -- the long, noisy PR build-up to the Diyala operation gave the leaders of the "al Qaeda associated groups" plenty of time to melt away into the night, safe and sound to fight another day. Lt. Gen. Raymond Odierno, commander of U.S ground forces, admitted cheerfully that 80 percent of what he called upper-level al Qaeda leaders fled before the attacks began, the Air Force Times reported on June 22.

From Fallujah, the curiously untouched "al Qaeda" leaders -- including the one-time Bushist bogeyman, Abu Musab al-Zarqawi -- spread mayhem elsewhere while American forces were attacking hospitals, raining chemical weapons on residential areas, and driving 300,000 people from their homes in the city. In similar fashion, the curiously untouched terrorist leaders from Diyala are obviously raising murderous hell elsewhere -- perhaps in previously peaceful Amerli, where more than 150 people were killed last week in one of the worst terror bombings of the war. (Terror bombings by the asymmetricals, that is; the state terror bombings that began with the first shock-and-awe "decapitation raids" and continue to this day have of course killed far more Iraqis.)

Arrowhead Ripper is being presented in the American press as an unalloyed success. Taking their lead from the New York Times and other bastions of the corporate media, newspapers and TV stations across the United States are carrying reports of the number of "al Qaeda" fighters killed in the province. The operation has been extensively extolled by Republicans in Congress, warbloggers and other abettors of aggressive war as proof that the "surge" is finally starting to work.

But the people of Baquba have a different view, as IPS reports. Reporter Ali al-Fadhily (the Baghdad-based partner of correspondent Dahr Jamail) has taken a novel approach to covering the offensive; instead of sitting in the Green Zone with Michael Gordon taking dictation from White House aides turned Pentagon flacks, al-Fadhily actually went to Baquba and talked to the people there. What he found was vast destruction, numerous civilian fatalities (up to 350, say members of the American-backed Iraqi government) -- and, as in Fallujah, the war crime of collective punishment being carried out against Sunni civilians, with an inevitable rise in support for armed resistance to the occupation. Some excerpts:

Ongoing U.S. military operations in Diyala province have brought normal life to an end and fueled support for the national resistance. Baquba, 30 mi. northeast of Baghdad, and capital city of the volatile Diyala province, has born the brunt of violence during the U.S. military Operation Arrowhead Ripper. Conflicting reports are on offer on the number of houses destroyed and numbers of civilians killed, but everyone agrees that the destruction is vast and the casualties numerous...

The operation was launched June 18 "to destroy the al-Qaeda influences in this province and eliminate their threat against the people," according to Brig. Gen. Mick Bednarek, deputy commanding officer of the 25th Infantry Division. But most Iraqis IPS interviewed in the area say the operation seeks more to break the national Iraqi resistance and those who support it. Adding credibility to this belief is the fact that the U.S. operational commander of troops involved in the operation told reporters June 22 that 80 percent of the top al-Qaeda leaders in Baquba fled before the offensive began.

"Americans want Sunni people to leave Diyala or else they face death," Salman Shakir from the Gatoon district in Baquba told IPS outside the U.S. military cordon around the besieged city. "They warned al-Qaeda days or maybe weeks before they attacked the province and so only us, the citizens, stayed to face the massacre." Shakir said many of his relatives and neighbors were killed by the military while attempting to leave the area. "I cannot tell you how many people were killed, but bodies of civilians were left in the streets."

"We all know now that the U.S. military is using the name of al-Qaeda to cover attacks against our national resistance fighters and civilians who wish immediate or scheduled withdrawal of foreign troops from Iraq," Hilmi Saed, an Iraqi journalist from Baghdad, told IPS on the outskirts of Baquba.

The Iraqi Islamic Party, a Sunni political group in the Iraqi cabinet, issued a statement July 1 alleging that more than 350 people had been killed in the U.S. military operation in Baquba. The group called the operation "collective punishment" and said "neighborhoods in western Baquba have witnessed, since last week, fierce attacks by occupation forces within Operation Arrowhead Ripper." The statement added, "The forces shelled these neighborhoods with helicopters, destroying more than 150 houses and killing more than 350 citizens. Their bodies are still under the wreckage. And they have

arrested scores of citizens."

...Animosity towards the United States appears to be rising throughout the area as a result of the military action. "Americans are pushing us to the corner of extremity by these massive crimes," Abbas al-Zaydi, a teacher from Baquba told IPS. "They simply want us to sell cheap our religion, history, tradition, and faith, or else they would call us terrorists."

Al-Zaydi added, "My son was not a fighter, but he was killed by a militia leader who is at the same time an Iraqi army division commander. Our great fault is only that we are Sunnis, and Americans do not like that."

"It is clear now that any Iraqi who refuses to serve the American plan is considered an enemy of the United States," a community leader in the city who did not want to give his name told IPS.

There is nothing unusual about this story. As already noted, it could have been written after Fallujah or any of the other "offensives" and "new strategies" and "security pushes" we have seen during the war: Blunderbuss attacks. Innocent victims. Iraqi anger. Bitterness and radicalization. The knowingly mendacious conflation of all insurgents with "al Qaeda." And the loud, cumbersome preparations that give the honchos of violence plenty of time to get away, leaving behind only the scrubs -- and the civilians -- to take the blow.

A cynic might be forgiven for believing that at this point, the Bush Administration is happy to have an amorphous mass of violent groups out there, just beyond reach, able to keep the country in constant turmoil -- a turmoil which requires the continued presence of American forces to keep it from worsening, as Bush and his Iraqi capos have been stressing this week. It is certainly an open fact that the United States has begun giving weapons to an alarming array of groups in recent months, some of which have been involved in the insurgency, and all of them beyond direct U.S. control. (This is an extension of earlier, more secret American moves to arm and train various sectarian and freebooting militias to operate on "sort of the dark side, if you will," to quote Dick Cheney.)

No one pursuing a rational strategy of containing violence in Iraq would adopt such a policy. That leaves us with two basic choices. Either the Bush Administration is pursuing a rational strategy whose true aims are not the ones given publicly for the surge; or else the Bushists have come to believe their own lies about al Qaeda's "central" role in the insurgency.

The latter could well be true. The shallow intellects who have driven the entire project of aggressive war in Iraq are certainly stupid enough to fall for their own bullshit (if we may resort to the vernacular) -- just as Adolf Hitler and his most fanatical followers adamantly refused to recognize the ultimate ruin

of their aggression in the streets of Stalingrad and on the beaches of Normandy. People in power are especially prone to self-delusion -- especially when they are slavishly fawned upon by their toadies and kept well away from any of the hideous consequences of their actions, as people in power usually are. If you add to this the almost pathologically willful ignorance of George W. Bush, and the pathetically derivative, historically uninformed, inch-deep "philosophies" of the neo-cons and their outriders, you have near-perfect conditions for self-delusion on a Neronian scale.

But we must remember that the most consistent war aim of the aggressors has been the establishment of a permanent military presence in Iraq. The aim was to secure control of a major oil source in the Middle East -- a "prize" that Dick Cheney, then head of Halliburton, limned in a talk at the Institute of Petroleum in 1999:

"While many regions offer great oil opportunities, the Middle East, with two-thirds of the world's oil and the lowest costs, is still where the prize ultimately lies."

The implantation of a military garrison to secure this ultimate prize has been the aggressors' openly stated goal for many years, long before they took power, as we have often noted here before. A succinct description of their thinking can be found in John Gray's important new book, *Black Mass*:

"Among the geopolitical objectives advanced by the neo-conservatives was the argument that the US must decouple from Saudi Arabia, which they viewed as complicit in terrorism. If it was to disengage in this way, the US needed another secure source of oil in the Gulf, and another platform for military bases. Iraq seemed to fit these requirements. By controlling a crucial part of the Gulf's oil reserves, the US could detach itself from an ally it no longer trusted. At the same time, it could ensure that it remained the dominant power in the region, with the capacity to limit the incursions of China, India and other energy-hungry states."

Gray goes on to note, correctly, that this was "always an incredible scenario," a utopian fantasy:



"The notion that post-Saddam Iraq would accept the transfer of its oil reserves into American hands was anyhow delusional. Why should a democratic Iraq -- if that had been possible -- accept the expropriation of its resource base?"

Why indeed? No self-respecting, sovereign Iraqi government would do such a thing. In fact, only a

gang of cowed collaborators kept in power solely through the presence of American troops would ever accept such an expropriation.

Which brings us around to a "rational" basis for a strategy of fomenting violence in Iraq. The Bushists may well have been sincerely self-deluded in their belief that they could grab Iraq's oil on the cheap, plant bases all over the country, stick a strongman on the throne, and be thanked by the Iraqis for it. But they have learned their lesson now. They know the only chance they have left of accomplishing their war aims -- the bases, the "Oil Law" -- lies in keeping those cowed, weak, deeply unpopular collaborators in office. Unbridled violence aids this objective, for it "justifies" the continuing presence of the American military -- which is the sole prop for the only kind of regime that would give away the nation's oil and accept foreign bases on its soil.

If this is indeed the "reasoning" behind the otherwise inexplicable policy of embittering the hearts and minds of the Iraqi people while arming violent groups and letting terrorist chieftains roam free, then this too is ultimately a delusion. In the end, sooner or later, the Iraqis will kick the Americans out of their country. There will be no bases, no "Oil Law" written by Washington lobbyists. The Bushists' war of aggression has come to ruin just as Hitler's did. The only question is how much more blood and treasure these rabid dead-enders will waste before their inevitable defeat. ***

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- **Militias and Death Squads: The Occupation Strategy to Divide Iraq, 18 March 2008**

Eman A. Khamas



March 18, 2008

Whether their name is sectarian militias, paramilitary groups, death squads, mercenaries, criminal gangs, rogue elements in the new Iraqi security forces (no matter what they are called or how different they are), it is said they are controlling Iraq now and turning it into a no-man's land. It is said that the American occupation authorities, and their Iraqi agents in the government are helplessly incapable of controlling them. That they are ever stronger, better functioning, and more organized , and that they are consolidating their control over the north and the south of Iraq, making its division a de facto truth.

Operating independently, or as part of the Iraqi government security forces trained and equipped by the US, these gangs have committed the worst of atrocities, five years after the fall of the State of Iraq. They have dismantled the society and the State, robbed the country, kidnapped, brutally tortured and assassinated thousands, drove millions of their houses, terrorized the citizens, the question remains why and how is it possible for them to commit all these crimes, and why there is no investigation or judicial pursuit for them all these year.

The propaganda that preceded the American invasion and accompanied it created a myth that the occupation would do justice to the Shiites and Kurds who were persecuted by the Sunnis in the last regime or even through history, and the word Sunni , even Arab , was connected to the last regime, the Baath, and later to what is called insurgency, terrorism, resistance ...etc. Remember the Sunni Triangle? A new division among the Iraqis was created between those who were supposed to accept the

occupation because it would serve their interests, and those who rejected it, because it was against their interests. Of course this myth was eventually dispersed, but it created a seed of some kind of segregation by the sectarian parties and the occupation authorities.

From the first days after the American occupation, (then) unknown gangs led mob-raids on the State facilities, the libraries, the museums, destroyed the official documents of the ministries and other institutions, looted and then burned the governmental buildings while the American troops were watching supportively, not to say anything about the buildings which were destroyed by the bombing. They systematically dismantled the industrial infrastructure of Iraq , and sold it as scrap to Iran, and the Iraqi people were too shocked and bewildered to ask what was going on, or why, and took it as chaos due to the absence of authority, they could not imagine that any sectarian militias would do such things...

In the summer of 2003, a newspaper of the same sectarian party was publishing previously prepared lists of names of Iraqi personalities to be assassinated, the lists were also put on the internet. All of them were either high officials in the Iraqi State, or just well known scientists, academics, diplomats, writers, artists...etc. The majority of them were Sunnis.

On the other hand, even before the occupation, hundreds of Iraqis were trained by the American intelligence agency and US army special operatives, somewhere in eastern Europe or in the U.S, to accompany the invading troops as paramilitary units, and help in the counter insurgency war.

These agent units composed the nucleus and the senior officers of the new Iraqi security forces, after the original forces were completely disbanded. The majority of them were Shiites and Kurds, connected to the major parties which were brought to Iraq by the occupation: the Supreme Council of the Islamic Revolution, the Dawa, the two main Kurdish parties, the Allawi and the Chalabi militias, working under the American supervision.

When the new Iraqi security forces were established in June 2004, they were chosen solely of these militias, specially of the Badr Brigades, the Iranian-trained wing of SCIRI , which constituted the Ministry of Interior commandos, and especially the Woolf Brigades, and the Kurdish Peshmerga. The Sadr militia, known as Jeish Al-Mahdi was "given" the Facilities Protection services, although they joined the police as ranks later in 2005 and specially in 2006. Other commandos brigades, such as the snake, the scorpion, the thunder, the tiger...are just different names for similar forces.

The Peshmerga, however, is a different story. Known as the liberators of Kurdistan, they supported the US occupation troops in 2003, and also in Fallujah. More than 100.000 militia men serving in the security forces of the regional government of Kurdistan. They are abducting thousands of Arabs,

Turkmens and other minorities from Mosul, Kirkuk, and other hundreds of smaller towns and villages in the north of Iraq, and imprisoning them in many secret prisons, of which only five are known in Suleimaniya, Arbil, Shaqlawa, Dahok, and Aqrah ...and the Peshmerga refuse to admit that. Trained by hundreds of elite Israeli intelligence officers, the Peshmerga four battalions are controlling Mosul, practicing brutal ethnic cleansing in Kirkuk and many other northern towns. They forced 100.000 Arab families out of Kirkuk, again committing different kinds on grave human rights violations. Eye witnesses of a huge explosion in Mosul last January, which killed tens families and injured hundreds, say that the Peshmerga was behind it.

The Iraqis were shocked by the extremely brutal techniques that the Iraqi police and the American troops were using to track down what they call "insurgency". A woman in her mid sixties was repeatedly raped by 13 Kurdish militiamen in Kirkuk, for example, a whole village was burnt south of Baghdad, its men arrested and tortured and killed because an American convoy was attacked in a place near by... But it is very important to mention here that it was in the interest of both sides (the Americans and their Iraqi agents) that the reputation of extreme brutality was deliberately attributed to the sectarian and ethnic militias, more than to their Americas. On the one hand to provoke the sectarian tensions, and to give the occupation a better humane face. Even after Abu Greib, families were very anxious to know if their sons were arrested by the Americans, not the Iraqi forces!!

Politically, decisions were made to deepen the discrimination sensitivities among the Iraqis: creating a governing council along sectarian and ethnic representation, a constitution draft focusing on the diversity (not the unity) of the Iraqi people and on federalism, the hasty elections and electoral fuss which provoked sectarianism, the decision to do the election for the transitional government in 2004, attacking Fallujah in the name of preparing the ground for the election, but worst of all was Bremer's decision of including the sectarian militias in the security forces, as away to fight the insurgency and also to find a solution for the private armed militias. Actually, they provided an official cover to the sectarian killings and death squads, giving the militia-loyal policemen, mostly Shiite, the money, training, and the weapon to scourge the other sect. Tow years later, the American commander general Petraeus, created yet a new militia, the Awakening councils, of Sunnis who are supposed to fight Al-Qaida, obviously they are a Sunni militia equivalent to the Shiite militias, specially Sadrists . They are supposed to protect their areas were they attacked by other sectarian militias, thus Petraeus planted more seeds for civil war, on grassroots level this time.

Probably the first obvious blow to the social fabric was when these Iraqi sectarian and ethnic troops were used to kill their brothers in Fallujah, and the propaganda that accompanied that. One of the new Iraqi TVs put pictures of some militias dancing a specific local dance of Kurdistan on the bodies of families in Fallujah, refugees running away from the bombing told stories of how the sectarian policemen humiliated their faith and forced them to say bad words against their sacred symbols and

such absurdities, leading to deepen the divisions.

Interestingly enough, the Iraqis were completely aware of the sectarian game. Demonstrations usually raise slogans against sectarianism. In fact, culturally, the Iraqis used to consider it rather un civilized or uncouth to ask or to talk about the ones' religious or sectarian affiliations. During the Fallujah attacks Shiite villages and towns took Sunni families in, near Karbala, the heart of Shiism. Shiite young men volunteered to fight with the Sunnis against the Americans in Fallujah. In the bridge stampede which killed about one thousands Shiites in 2005, people talk about a young Sunni, Othman, who managed to save lives of 6 Shiites from drowning, then he drowned of exhaustion and died. A Shiite friend, now , at this moment, is hiding 5 young Sunnis whose lives are threatened...etc.

After the Fallujah massacre, and the atrocities in the prisons of Abu Greib, Bucca, Badush and others, came the transitional government of Al-Jafari (Dawa party), which was very keen on giving the impression of being extremely sectarian and ruthless. A Badr Brigades officer, and a SCIRI senior, Bayan Jabr, was appointed a minister of Interior. He purged the ministry of any Sunni officer. During 2005, horrible stories were coming from different areas of Baghdad and out of the prisons. Families repeatedly talk bout tens of young men in uniform and in the interior ministry cars raiding certain neighborhoods, arresting men, who never come back again. When the families ask in the ministry of interior or in the police stations, the officials deny to have anything to do with the raids or to know anything about them.

The bodies of these arrested men are found some days later in remote places, in the garbage, or in the morgue, savagely tortured, executed and mutilated. Their trade marks are eyes torn out, bones and limbs broken, head and chest full of drill holes, burned skin...skin diseases spread due to lack of hygienic atmosphere. Released prisoners talk about notorious conditions inside the over crowded prisons, to the point that the air becomes insufficient... The targets are normally Sunni personalities, especially those well known for defying the occupation. What is really striking and conspicuous was how these thousands of crimes were never investigated, and always ignored by the occupation, and the immunity the police has to do the raids, which normally take hours after midnight, during the curfew, with tens of men and cars, shooting, shouting, without any one noticing what was going on.

The number of these prisoner is unknown, but according to the human rights organizations, they are 160.000-180.000. In this atmosphere operation "Lightening/Thunder" was done, and obviously failed. It was an American-Iraqi joint operation to impose security on Baghdad. What happened was an operation limited to few areas of the capital, with Sunni majority, to clean it of "terrorists" while other areas of Baghdad, well known to be the strong holds of the sectarian militias are exempt of any search. The result was arresting 6 hundreds of men, mainly on sectarian bases.

When Maliki got the office of prime minister, it took him 5 months to fix a coalition government in 2006 , but he could do that only through a deal with the Sadr militia, giving them 6 ministries of services, and a green light to carry out their sectarian agenda of cleansing the mixed neighborhoods of Baghdad and the surrounding areas, with the police complete complicity, and support. The new minister of interior Jawad Bloani, encouraged the infiltration of the sectarian militias as never before. In the words of the International Crisis Group "the Sadrists controlled new territories, attracted new recruits, accumulated recourses, and infiltrated the police...they were engaged in abhorrent sectarian killings, and restored to plunder and theft...executed untold numbers of Sunnis...merely because they were Sunnis".

Appalling stories began to come out of Iraq, of systematic sectarian cleansing, specially after the bombing of the Samarra Shrine. Tow more joint military operations were conducted in Baghdad in 2006-07. The same scenario was carried out regarding the exemption of the sectarian militias of any pursuit. In the south, however, the situation is different. The struggle is intr-Shiite militias. The Badr brigades are the most powerful and has moved aggressively to control the police in Amara, Diwaniya, and Nassiriya... They are accused of many assassinations of former officers, academics and professionals...other militias want their share of power, specially the Sadr militia and the Fadhila party. Many times, the conflict turned into armed fighting.

Last week, prime minister Maliki ordered that all the Iraqis have to hold their civil status IDs , not their personal of professional IDs, which is a very strange and dangerous decision, given the fact that in the civil Id, it is mentioned the full name of the person, his mothers', his tribe, his religion, his birth place...practically telling his sectarian affiliation, even if he does not believe in it. It is strange and dangerous because Maliki knows very well, and he has admitted it many times that the Iraqi security forces are infiltrated by what he called rogue elements, e.g. sectarian militias, who would use these information to liquidate the other sect.

On the other hand, Maliki knows very well, too, that there are false check points in the streets, specially of Baghdad, made by militias in uniform, and they would use these information to commit all their crimes of assassinations, kidnappings, killings... the question remains why would Maliki offer the militias this great help? On the other hand, at least 18.000 new militia member joined the security forces since the second half of last year, according to many sources.

For the Americans it was very useful this state of terror. Many eye witnesses talk about militias' raids done in daylight, with the American and the Iraqi forces watching and not moving a finger to help the victims. It is illogical that all these thousands of extrajudicial killings, disappearances, illegal raids, illegal check points which kidnap people and kill them, and horrible torture linked to the militias would go unnoticed.

These militias argue that the Sunni "terrorists", namely al-Qaida, are targeting the Shiite or mixed civilians in crowded areas like market places, bus garages, mosques, other religious gatherings...etc. They were attacked, killing thousands of them, in un understandable operations that kill the Iraqis, and does not hurt neither the occupiers, the political parties, nor the resistance...very mysterious and atrocious, specially that no one declares responsibility for them. Again they go un investigated or questioned. The question remains who would benefit from these mass killings? And the only logical answer we have is the American occupation itself, or any of the foreign intelligence elements who would benefit from the collapse of Iraq as a unified country.

It is well known now that the war in Iraq is also a mercenary war, there are dozens of thousands of foreign mercenaries, 180.000 hired killers, very beautifully paid by the American government (1000-1500$ a day) . Supervised by CIA "experts" , Bremer exempted them from having to obey any law, neither the Iraqi, nor the Pentagon. Armed men from Latin America to South Africa to eastern Europe to Asia...outlawed by the Geneva conventions, there they are in tens of thousands. In addition, there thousands of intelligence agents from all over the world, especially U.S., U.K., Israel, Iran. All these military men are not in Iraq for picnic. All serve their own agendas, there are stories by eyewitnesses of strange people and cars being near the place of the explosion which happens immediately after they leave, we have the outrageous story of the two British spies who were caught in Basra, wearing Arabic dresses, their cars heavily loaded with weapons, in the middle of the crowd. We do not know so far who exploded the U.N. headquarter, or the Samarra shrines...But we know that the American authorities in Iraq prevented the result of the investigation of the U.N. explosion to be declared.
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- **IRAQ: 'US the Biggest Producer of Terror' (Ahmed Ali, Dahr Jamail 25 Jan 2008)**

Ahmed Ali and Dahr Jamail*

BAQUBA, Jan 25 (IPS) - **Broken promises have brought a dramatic increase in anti-U.S. sentiment across the capital city of Iraq's Diyala province.**

Many people in Baquba, capital of Diyala 40 km northeast of Baghdad, had supported U.S. forces when they ousted former Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussein. But failed reconstruction projects and muddled policies mean the U.S. has lost that support.

"The Americans based their strategy in Iraq on certain Shias here who have direct enmity with Sunnis and allegiance to Iran," resident Ayub Ibrahim told IPS. "This was the source of the gap between certain Shias which the U.S. backs, and certain Sunnis they back." Shias and Sunnis are different sects within Islam.

The U.S. has also alienated people through its policy of extensive detentions. Many believe that raids that lead to arrests are based on motivated information given to the U.S. military by Shia militiamen who have infiltrated the Iraqi army and police.

"We never witnessed an attempt to arrest Shia people either by the U.S. army or the Iraqi police and army," resident Abdul Sattar al-Badri told IPS. Most people see no reasonable basis for many of the arrests.

In November the International Committee of the Red Cross said that around 60,000 people are currently detained in Iraq.

"The Americans occupied our country and put our men in prisons," Dhafir al-Rubaiee, an officer from Iraq's previous army told IPS. "The majority of these prisoners have been arrested for nothing other than for being Sunni. Every one of these prisoners has a family, and these families now have reason to hate Americans."

Others blame the lack of security and the destroyed infrastructure for the increasing anti-U.S. sentiment.

"The lack of security is a direct result of the occupation," resident Abu Ali told IPS. "The Americans crossed thousands of miles to destroy our home and kill our men. They are the reason for all our disasters."

Another resident, speaking on condition of anonymity added, "We lived in need during the period of the Saddam government, but we were safe. We were compelled to work sometimes 20 hours a day to earn our living, but we were happy to see our children and relatives together." U.S. forces, he said, have ended all that.

Abu Tariq believes the U.S. military intentionally destroyed Iraq's infrastructure. "The Americans destroyed the electricity, water pumping stations, factories, bridges, highways, hospitals, schools, buildings, and opened the borders for strangers and terrorists to get easily into the country," he said.

The large number of Iraqis killed by U.S. forces has also hardly endeared the forces to the people.

"When targeted by a roadside bomb or suicide bomber, U.S. soldiers shoot at people randomly. Innocent civilians have been killed or injured," Yaser Abdul-Rahman, a 45-year-old schoolmaster told IPS. "Thousands of people have been killed like this."

The anti-U.S. sentiment in Baquba is now so high that people no longer hide their distrust of the U.S.

"At the beginning of the occupation, the people of Iraq did not realise the U.S. strategy in the area," Abu Taiseer, a member of the communist party in the city told IPS. "Their strategy is based on destruction and massacre. They do anything to have their agenda fulfilled.

"Now, Iraqis know that behind the U.S. smile is hatred and violence," Taiseer added. "They call others violent and terrorists, but what they are doing in Iraq and in other countries is the origin and essence of terror. America is the biggest producer of terror, and they spend huge funds for creating and training death squads all over the world."

Despite the differing U.S. ways of dealing with Shias and Sunnis, the two sects seem one in their hatred of the U.S.

"Look at our country, it will need 30 years to get back again," Edan Barham told IPS. "This has nothing to do with sects; all of us are Iraqis, and we should think of Iraq in a better way than sectarian lines."

"People of Iraq of all sects now realise that it is the occupation represented by the Americans that has damaged the country," resident Khalil Ibrahim said.

Political analyst Azhar al-Teengane says the only Iraqis who support the occupation are those benefiting directly from it.

"The occupation is good for politicians who have made money, militiamen, contractors and opportunists," Teengane said. "These form not more than 5 percent of Iraqi people."

Self-rule could help lower anti-U.S. sentiment, said resident Jalal al-Taee. "In order to improve the situation, the U.S. army should let the people of this city run it."

(*Ahmed, our correspondent in Iraq's Diyala province, works in close collaboration with Dahr Jamail, our U.S.-based specialist writer on Iraq who has reported extensively from Iraq and the Middle East)
(END/2008)

- **A gripping story, and another story yet to be told (25 Jan 2008)**

Arablinks

January 25, 2008

The gist of Mark Perry's spellbinding two-part article in the AsiaTimes online (as far as Iraq itself is concerned) is this: Starting in 2003, US military officers on the ground started meeting with, and trying to work out cooperative arrangements with, Iraqis who needed help in fighting off the Wahhabi fundamentalists aka AlQaeda who were flooding the country after the fall of Saddam.

The efforts of these officers were opposed by the White House. Finally in 2005 one such cooperative effort went ahead anyway, involving cooperation between a Marine unit and Sunni leaders fighting AlQaeda in Falluja. That example of cooperation, with the support of "a tight circle of Pentagon civilian advisers around Rumsfeld", was eventually made the model for the Awakening Council strategy in Anbar province. A later attempt to expand this to areas south of Baghdad ran into trouble when a bomb blast at a meeting at the Mansour Hotel in the GreenZone killed many of that scheme's tribal supporters. But the strategy went ahead, including in Babil province, where the provincial government is Shiite, and including also an agreement with the multi-area Janabi tribe.

So the general approach is continuing, but at same time, this brings with it the realization that (1) If it is a sound strategy, even for the short term, then there was no reason not to have implemented it five years ago; and (2) If the best available strategy now seems to be to ally with Iraqi nationalists fighting AlQaeda, and this could have been implemented five years ago, but for the White House ideologues, this raises the next level of questions, or as Mark Perry puts it, continuing his summary of the thinking of the military officers involved:

All of which raises the question of whether the United States should have invaded Iraq in the first place, an issue that is becoming more pertinent to military officers who view the American adventure in Iraq as a political and military failure.
In a nutshell, from the military-operations point of view, the learning curve has been this: (1) The White House opposed any and all deals with Iraqi leaders even if it meant joining hands with Iraqis to fight AlQaeda; (2) now that White House opposition to that strategy has been reversed, and the strategy is showing dramatic short-term results, the question they are raising is this: Why not have done that initially, and in fact, if the key was to ally with Iraqis in fighting AlQaeda, why did we invade in order to fight these people in the first place?

I have left out, in this account of Mark Perry's story, a lot of the detail and the color, and I have also left out all of the extremely interesting intra-military debates, and for that there is no alternative but to

read the articles from beginning to end, and carefully, a couple of times, to let the enormity of what has been done to the American military really sink in. It is a colossal story in itself.

But back to the question of recent Iraqi history. I have some comments on the story of how American strategy has played out in Iraq, as a result of a year and a half of reading accounts of this from the Arab-press side. In a nutshell:

Perry tells of obstruction from the White House (Bremer, Rice, and others) to deals of any kind with the Sunni tribes in the period from 2003 to 2005 or -06. Then deals of that type started being okayed. This is presented as essentially a case of obstruction by ignorant ideologues, eventually overcome in a process that could be called a victory for practical common-sense, or some such expression. Perry's story includes no particular motivation for the change to the Awakening strategy. It was merely that the merits of the idea gradually came to be unarguable.

The prevailing Iraqi view of this is quite different. American strategy starting in 2003 was to use Shiite groups to harass the remnants of the Baath regime and their sympathizers (aka the Iraqi national resistance, but which was and is in fact much broader than that), and anyone shooting at US troops was either in that class or AlQaeda. Hence the logic of the "no deals" prohibition. Then at some time in 2005 or 2006, partly in the face of growing disaffection on the part of the Saudis and others, and partly from concern about Maliki's ties to Tehran, there had to be a tilt to the Sunnis, hence the decision to enlist Sunni groups, in order to, among other things, act as a counterweight to the sectarian Shiite power. In other words, so far this has been a two-act occupation, first helping Shiites harass Sunnis, then in a second stage helping Sunnis deter Shiites. There are many provisos and nuances, but essentially this is the Iraqi story: This was from the beginning a sectarian strategy, with a shift sometime in 2005 or -06 from anti-Sunni/pro-Shiite to anti-Shiite/pro-Sunni, in terms of the overall weight of American military influence. The weight of the American alliances shifted, but this had nothing to do with "learning about Iraq", and everything to do with keeping the divide-and-conquer ball rolling.

The fact that there was a learning-curve-type struggle to okay *this particular form of a tilt to the Sunnis* doesn't mean that the tilt to the Sunnis "just happened". There is an ongoing US policy, which is a sectarian policy, and in the carrying out of that policy, this Awakening Council strategy was obviously seen as the way forward. There are two stories here: The story of the officers' struggles to get common-sense policies okayed; and the story of the sectarian US policy. They are two different stories. Mark Perry has given us a lot of the first story from the point of view of the common-sense of the officers on the ground. But the second story, from the point of view of the common sense of Iraqis, hasn't sunk in at all as far as the anglosphere is concerned.

And the reason why the two stories don't easily fit together is this: In the American mind, there was never any concept of Iraq, or of fighting in Iraq, other than the sectarian one. "Iraq" was always "Sunna versus Shiia". So any strategy, or any concepts at all respecting the country, had to start from one side or the other. Why this has been the case is another story, but it is a fact. And consequently, the idea of allying with "Iraqis"--even if it meant in a common fight against the Wahhabi fundamentalists--wasn't on. It would have meant allying with "Sunnis", at a time when we were trying to help the underdog "Shia" get out from under their yoke. It was one against the other; there was no concept of an "Iraqi".

And as Mark Perry points out, once people in the military realized that they could profitably ally with Sunni tribes in defending against AlQaeda, this immediately started to bring down the whole ideological house of cards: (1) Some Iraqis care about their country as a whole, and (2) why exactly did we take these same people to be our enemy in the first place. Not that good for morale, Perry notes.

I am sure that the story Mark Perry tells is exactly what happened, from the vantage-point of the US military officers on the ground in Iraq and those responsible for them. And as I said, the effects of this on the US military are a story that bears a couple of careful readings, a period of reflection, and then another reading. Because perhaps on the third reading you will begin to ask yourself why this story has taken so long to be told.

But from the point of view of Iraq, it isn't the whole story, and I don't think it is necessarily even the most important part of the story from their point of view.

- **The Boys from Baghdad: Iraqi Commandos Trained by U.S. Contractor, 20 Sept 2007**

by Pratap Chatterjee, Special to CorpWatch
September 20th, 2007
"Starting the month with a bang, the boys from Baghdad executed two baited ambushes ... and further confirmed the [Emergency Response Unit's] ability to conduct operations with stealth and violence of action," writes an unofficial historian for the ERU, in Unit History of 1st Battalion, a report obtained by CorpWatch.(1)



Cartoon by Khalil Bendib

The "boys" that the report praises are members of one of dozens of elite Iraqi commandos units that function as a "third force" to augment the Iraqi police and army, both of which are widely considered to be failures. On this mission in early July 2005, the Emergency Response Unit, backed by the First Battalion of the Fifth Infantry Regiment of the U.S. Army, had detained "anti-Iraqi forces" and intercepted roadside bombs.

Their tactics owed much to a secretive U.S. private contractor, U.S. Investigations Services (USIS), which conducted ERU trainings on U.S. military bases in Iraq -- including at Camp Dublin and Camp Solidarity. The trainings began under General David Petreaus as an effort to bolster security in Iraq, and soon evolved into a system for providing support to the deeply sectarian Ministry of the Interior.

Beginning in May 2004, U.S. authorities contracted with USIS to create the first ERU. The non-sectarian force is supposed "to respond to national-level law enforcement emergencies. The four-week training runs recruits through SWAT-type emergency response training focusing on terrorist incidents, kidnappings, hostage negotiations, explosive ordnance, high-risk searches, high-risk assets, weapons of mass destruction, and other national-level law enforcement emergencies" according to the Pentagon.

Who Owns USIS?

For the first 11 years of its existence as a private company USIS was owned by the Carlyle Group. In May 2007 USIS was sold again to Providence Equity Partners (PEP) for $1.5 billion. The Rhode Island private equity group specializes in media, entertainment and communications companies. PEP's most famous acquisition was the purchase of Clear Channel's television network.(41)

The top advisor to PEP is Michael Powell, a former policy advisor to Dick Cheney, when Cheney was U.S. Secretary of Defense. But Powell is better known for two other reasons: He is the son of Colin Powell, a former secretary of state and chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, the highest military position in the Department of Defense. Michael Powell's other claim to fame was that when George W. Bush appointed Colin Powell secretary of state, the president chose Michael to be chairman of the Federal Communications Commission (FCC). There he presided over the deregulation that allowed Clear Channel to acquire the television stations in a way that would have been previously illegal.(42)

Two years after Michael Powell resigned from the FCC, his client, PEP, bought up the very same television stations.

By April 2006, the ERUs had conducted 117 "Close Target Reconnaissance" missions in Baghdad alone, completing 104 of them, and capturing 236 "suspects," according to estimates by Lieutenant Colonel Jeffrey Voss, military advisor in charge of the ERU program.

The ERUs are now officially controlled and paid by the Iraqi Ministry of Interior and are accompanied by U.S. trainers or soldiers throughout their training. But a high-level State Department report issued in 2005 explains that the Iraqi commandos were initially rejected by the very Ministry of the Interior that they were intended to support when they were created more than three years ago. Instead, U.S. officials and contractors controlled the ERUs, which became an unofficial Iraqi face to provide local cover for U.S. operations. With no support from the Iraqi government at the time, the ERU had to rely on USIS for salaries, thereby becoming a privately financed militia.

Michael John, a spokesperson for USIS, told CorpWatch that the company is still under contract with the Pentagon for ERU training, but says that the support is provided strictly as part of training. "We are in a training and not in an operational capacity. The National Police Support Team (NPST) operates under the jurisdiction of Iraq's Ministry of Interior and the U.S. Department of Defense."

Dozens of interviews conducted by CorpWatch with high-ranking military and government officials over the past 12 months suggest that even at the level of Petreaus's staff, few appeared to know the specific role and scope of ERU activity. What is clear is that the ERU is just one of at least six different U.S. "security" training programs worth over $20 billion that a variety of U.S. agencies have provided to the many factions in Iraq. (See accompanying boxes for examples of other programs.)

It is becoming increasingly clear that such training programs may be causing or at least exacerbating civil war. Part of the blame lies within the complex failures of the U.S. occupation and part with the loyalties and skills of the forces recruited into the myriad security training programs that are associated with different ministries and thus with different, and often rival, political factions.

"Of course, they are fucking things up," Robert Young Pelton, author of "Licensed to Kill, Hired Guns in the War on Terror" told CorpWatch. "Because the U.S. is arbitrarily putting weapons and power in the hands of those who choose to fight, rather than those who are in the moral right,"(2) explaining that few who sign up have any previous law enforcement credentials.

The Third Force

The fact that neither the Iraqi army nor the police were able to tackle the growing insurgency became glaringly obvious in April 2004 when violent uprisings exploded across the country. Iraqi soldiers assigned to fight in Fallujah fled the field.(3) A group of Baghdad police, sent to assist U.S. soldiers battling the Mahdi army in Najaf at the same time, also refused to fight.(4)

Special Police Commandos

The ERUs are not the only "third force" police commandos trained in Iraq under the control of the Ministry of the Interior. The Special Police Commandos, a SWAT team that has been often described as death squads, also have unofficial U.S. "advisors." (Unlike the Anbar militias described below, the Special Police Commandos are not trained by USIS, but are a separate force, albeit working for the same ministry.) The commandos were first composed of veterans of Hussein's special forces and Republican Guard, and headed up by Adnan Thabit, the nephew of Falah al-Naqib, the interior minister under the interim government of Ayad Allawi that followed Paul Bremer. The commandos quickly became notorious after a nationally televised reality show featured them brutally interrogating suspected "terrorists."(21)

"In one show, a former policeman with two black eyes confessed to killing two police officers in

was delivered to them," wrote Peter Maass, a *New York Times* journalist who first detailed the role of the Special Police Commandos in May 2005. Maass also documented several cases he personally encountered in which the commandos abused prisoners.(22)

Maass also noted the potential for the commandos to become enmeshed in sectarian killings, observing that Allawi, Naqib and Thabit are all Sunni.

"Paramilitary forces have a tendency to become politicized ... [and] used for internal combat," wrote Maass. "In a country as riven as Iraq -- with Shiites, Sunnis, Kurds and Turkmen vying for power -- a paramilitary force that is controlled by one faction can be a potent weapon against others. That is why the commandos are a conundrum -- in the country's unstable military and political landscape, it is impossible to know where they are heading."

Weeks after Maass' article appeared, his words would seem prophetic. In May 2005, Allawi was replaced by Jaafari, a conservative religious Shiite from Islamic Dawa Party, in the first elected government. Bayan Jabr, a former high-ranking member of the Iranian-backed Badr Brigade, the military arm of the fundamentalist Shiite Supreme Council for the Islamic Revolution in Iraq (SCIRI), took over as interior minister in Iraq's transitional government.

Each commando unit had a nickname such as the Scorpions, Snakes and Tigers. One particularly notorious group, led by General Gharrawi, was the Wolf Brigade, later renamed the Volcanoes.(23) A U.S. Department of State report recounts an August 2005 incident in which about 50 men suspected of being Volcanoes raided the Al Huriya neighborhood in northern Baghdad, kidnapped 36 Sunnis and killed them. Acid was used to burn their faces before they were shot in the head.(24)

Under Jabr, the Special Police Commandos were taken over by two generals, Rasheed Fleyah and Mahdi Sabeh, both Shiites. In November 2005, American troops discovered 169 beaten, whipped and starved prisoners (most of whom were Sunni) at the Al-Jadiriyah bunker, a secret detention center run by the country's Interior Ministry. One of these victims, Jamal Hamdani, was left impotent and paralyzed on one side of his body after repeated electrocution of his spine and genitals during two months in detention in a secret prison in Kadhamiya, Baghdad. An electric drill had been used on his chin.(25)

Six months later, in May 2006, a similar center was found in Hilla, where some victims had holes drilled into their bodies. Then, as many as 1,400 torture victims were discovered at Site Four in east Baghdad under the control of the Wolf Brigade. Jabr later admitted that torture had taken

place in both Al-Jadiriyah and Site Four.

U.S. military officials declared themselves surprised. “I did not see militia groups in the Special Police Commandos in the time I was there,” General David Petraeus, the man in charge of security training for Iraqis until September 2005, told a Frontline documentary team in late 2006.(26) (Petraeus was appointed the commander in chief of all U.S. troops in Iraq in January 2007.)

When the current government of Nouri al-Maliki took charge in April 2006, the Special Police Commandos were officially disbanded, merged with the ERU, and renamed the National Police.(27) In October 2006 the new Minister of the Interior, Jawad al-Bolani dismissed Fleyah and Sabeh, but the rumors of death squads run out of the Interior Ministry persist.(28)

It should be noted that as each new political group takes control of the Interior Ministry and receive U.S. training, it creates new fiefdoms inside the bureaucracy that never disappear but instead support rival militias that exacerbate rather than resolve the sectarian conflict. A recent Los Angeles Times article explains that each floor of the 11-story headquarters of the ministry is now occupied by a different faction (most of whom are Shiite) working under the U.S. advisors stationed directly above them on the top floor.(29)

U.S. planners in Iraq were suddenly forced to admit that the country was on the verge of spreading insurrections and looming civil war. Officials at the Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA), headed by Paul Bremer, began earnest discussions about creating a “third force” (5) of highly trained commando units that would be able to deal with hostage situations and unforeseen criminal or political violence. (In a monograph on the evolution of Iraq’s security forces, Andrew Rathmell of the Rand Corporation, a think-tank closely affiliated with the Pentagon, defined the third force as “constabulary forces that lie somewhere between civilian police and armed forces.”)

Senior U.S. advisors at the Iraqi Ministry of Interior, notably State Department official Steve Casteel, supported the creation of this third force. A former senior U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration official, Casteel previously helped train government forces in Peru, Bolivia and Colombia, where he was involved in the hunt for Pablo Escobar, head of the Medellin cocaine cartel.(6)

Ministry of Interior advisors drew up plans for an Emergency Response Unit consisting of three companies of 60 men each, plus a headquarters unit to do high-risk search, arrest, hostage rescue, and crisis response operations. Once trained, these units were to be integrated into the regular Iraqi Police Service. The advisors also planned similar elite units, Bureau of Dignitary Protection (BDP), to protect

high-ranking Iraqi officials who were under threat of kidnapping. A total of 370 ERU and 395 BDU personnel were trained in the initial phase and deployed in counter-insurgency operations in Baghdad.(7)

This early ERU training was conducted under a $64.5 million no-bid contract issued in May 2004(10) to U.S. Investigations Services (USIS), a former federal agency that started out conducting background investigations for civil service personnel.(11) At first, the CPA officials who controlled the purse strings of the Iraqi Ministry of Finance, used oil revenues to finance the contract. Today, the USIS contract, which has been renewed twice, is paid for with Pentagon (and thus U.S. taxpayer) funds.(12) Most of the trainers are retired military personnel plus a few police officers and federal agents.

U.S. control was further enhanced by conducting the trainings at U.S. military bases. At Camp Dublin, near the Baghdad International Airport, new ERU recruits were expected to live alongside their USIS trainers. The four- to eight-week trainings took place at a special facility inside Dublin that was built on a bare plot of land by First Kuwaiti, a contractor that later won the bid to build the U.S. embassy in Baghdad.(13)

USIS also trains ERUs at Camp Solidarity (originally dubbed Camp Gunslinger) in the Sunni neighborhood of Aadhamiya.(14)

Greg (not his real name) worked in a team of 45 USIS trainers based at Camp Dublin to teach ERU recruits skills such as weapons use, close-quarter battle tactics, and forced entry into buildings through doors and windows. "We want to develop a unit of the Iraqi military that can take care of their own problems internally. It's not publicized a lot for whatever reason, but it is true that we are doing that," he told the Detroit Metro Times newspaper.(15)

Once trained, the ERUs were quickly dispatched to "lead" counter-insurgency operations beside U.S. forces, often in combat zones. "They conduct their missions with us on the sidelines," Lieutenant Voss, the ERU program head, told The Advisor, a newspaper published by the U.S. military security training program in Baghdad.(16)

USIS

U.S. Investigations Services traces its origins back to 1883 as a part of the federal government's Civil Service Commission (CSC). (8) Tasked with checking backgrounds of prospective government employees, CSC evolved into the Investigations Service arm of the Office of Personnel Management. In 1996, the Clinton administration privatized this office, purportedly to save money, and sold it for $545

million to the Carlyle Group and the New York investment firm of Welsh, Carson, Anderson, and Stowe.(37) Ten years after the sale, USIS, a private company, has a near monopoly on “screening transactions,” conducting some 20 million a year, roughly 90 percent of the total.(38)

The contract to provide commando training in Iraq was a departure for USIS, which had no previous involvement in security training. And it was just the first of several government projects that USIS took over from federal agencies. In September 2006, USIS won a contract to provide the staffing for around-the-clock watch operations at towers erected by Boeing in the Arizona desert to monitor the Mexican border for the U.S. government. Its task is “to detect, identify, classify, and respond to and resolve illegal entry attempts at our land borders with Mexico and Canada."(39) Although USIS will not take the place of the Border Patrol agents, who are federal employees, the Virginia-based company plays a role in the selection of agents through its contract to do background checks on them. (see “Fencing the Border: Boeing's High-Tech Plan Falters”)

A year later, in July 2007, USIS won a contract to provide the data, software and analysts to track the estimated 550,000 “fugitive aliens” in the U.S.(40)

Disowned and Criticized

USIS’s ERU training program ran into problems from its first days in Iraq during the caretaker government of Ayad Allawi, who took charge in July 2004. Iraqi government officials refused to recognize the ERU graduates or to pay them salaries on a regular basis. This stance led to conflicts with U.S. government officials, who believed ERU trainees should be integrated into the police force, according to a critical July 2005 report from the Inspector General of the U.S. State Department.(17)

Rejected by Baghdad, the ERU became an adjunct of the U.S. military, relying on the U.S. Special Forces for operational intelligence. At one point, when the ERU salaries were five months in arrears, USIS started to pay its recruits a $75 monthly salary.(18)

DynCorp Police Training

The rank-and-file of Iraq's police also undergo training and mentorship from a private company -- some 700 trainers working for DynCorp, a Virginia-based corporation.43 DynCorp also employs 377 people to train police in Afghanistan.(44) For its training and security work in the two countries in fiscal years 2004, 2005 and 2006, the company received $1.6 billion, which accounted for roughly 30 percent of its revenue during those years.(45)

The Iraq program was first issued to DynCorp as a no-bid contract in April 2003 and renewed in September 2006.(46) The latest contract, which expired at the end of May 2007, is currently up for bid. The Special Inspector General for Iraqi Reconstruction, an independent U.S. government agency, criticized DynCorp for overspending on the building of training facilities -- such as $43.8 million for a residential camp in Baghdad for trainers that has never been used.(47)

A 2006 Pentagon and State Department investigation into the police training program in Afghanistan revealed that managers had no idea how many police officers were actually on duty or what became of thousands of trucks and other equipment issued to police units.(48) The report concludes that the police were largely incapable of carrying out routine law enforcement work. While the report investigators do not blame DynCorp directly, Afghan officials have complained about the poor quality of trainers and their high salaries.

Ali Jalali, a military historian who served as Afghanistan's interior minister from 2002 to 2005, told the *New York Times*: "They were good on patrols in Oklahoma City, Houston, or Miami. But not in a country where you faced rebuilding the police force."(49)

Others say the same -- that DynCorp's Iraq training has also been a wasted effort. "It is my professional opinion that the police training program in Iraq has been a complete failure," said Gerald Burke, a retired Massachusetts police major who worked as an adviser to Iraq's Ministry of Interior for two years, when he testified before the U.S. Congress House of Representatives Armed Services Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations in April 2007.(50)

Another source of conflict between Baghdad and Washington centered around how to define the pool of potential trainees. The State Department report recommended that trainers should draw recruits from within the existing police force, in order to make the ERUs more palatable to the Iraqi government. When the first elected government took over in May 2005, al-Jafaari's administration agreed to integrate the ERU and BDP units into the Ministry of the Interior.(19) However the training continued to be conducted separately from the regular police program contracted to Virginia-based

DynCorp (see box).

The ERU initial training also came under fire for alleged human rights abuses. In the spring of 2005, Colonel Ted Westhusing, a military ethics expert from Oklahoma who was in charge of the USIS contract, received an anonymous four-page letter accusing USIS of deliberately reducing the number of trainers to increase its profit margin. Westhusing was supervising the ERU program at the time. The letter, which was eventually released to Texas journalist Robert Bryce earlier this year under the Freedom of Information Act, detailed two incidents in which USIS contractors allegedly witnessed or participated in killing Iraqis during the assault on Fallujah in 2004. “ERU Mentors [USIS contractors] are conducting real world ops [operations]. They shot their weapons and killed Iraqis,” wrote the whistle-blower. “(Name deleted) was telling me how many Iraqis he had killed until I told him to shut the hell up. I was appalled by this. I have talked to the Mentors and am told that if they don’t go with the Iraqis the Iraqis won’t fight.”

Worried that “it would put his contract at risk," an unnamed USIS manager did not report the accusations to the U.S. military supervisors according to a November 2005 investigative article by T. Christian Miller in the Los Angeles Times.(20)

On receipt of the letter, Westhusing reported the allegations to his superiors, but told them that he believed USIS was complying with the terms of its contract. U.S. officials investigated and found "no contractual violations," and “these allegations to be unfounded.”

But over the next few months Westhusing became increasingly dissatisfied with the company. In June 2005, he attended a meeting in Iraq in which he angrily complained of "his dislike of the contractors, [who] were paid too much money by the government," according to Miller’s sources.

Shortly after Westhusing had left the meeting, a USIS employee discovered the colonel lying on the floor in a trailer in a pool of blood, a single gunshot wound to the head. A note discovered by the body, in Westhusing's handwriting, pointed to suicide: "I cannot support a msn [mission] that leads to corruption, human rights abuse and liars. I am sullied," it says. "I came to serve honorably and feel dishonored. Death before being dishonored any more."

"Equipping Iraqis for Civil War”

USIS training continues today under a new contract issued earlier this year, although few details have been made public. Occasionally the Pentagon’s public affairs office publishes short descriptions of ERU missions. A July 21, 2007 press release, for example, describes one group, accompanied the previous day by U.S. military advisors, that “detained three suspected members of a rogue Jaysh al-Mahdi militia group.” Also known as the Mahdi Army, the militia is led by the powerful and popular

Shia leader, Moqtada al-Sadr, and is based in Sadr City, the poor Shia neighborhood in northwestern Baghdad.(30)

Such raids are fraught with problems: The perception that the U.S. or the Iraqi government is backing raids on groups with popular support and parliamentary representation, such as the Mahdi Army, could fuel civil war.

Indeed some fear that U.S.-trained militias, rather than adding security, are already exacerbating sectarian strife. “We have been going about pumping out so many individuals with weapons, with uniforms, that my greatest fear is that in our effort to train and equip the Iraqi security forces, what we have been doing is equipping Iraqis for civil war,” Matt Sherman, a civilian advisor to Iraq’s Interior ministry, told Frontline.(35)

"It is like raising a crocodile," Saad Yousef al-Muttalibi, told the Washington Times when asked about the various “third force” training schemes. The Al-Maliki cabinet member, who is in charge of negotiating reconciliation agreements, continued: "It is fine when it is a baby, but when it is big, you can't keep it in the house."(36)

Others point out that these trainings are a throwback to colonial divide-and-conquer techniques. “The ERUs represent a return to not only the old Special Forces/CIA counterinsurgency model [fighting fire with fire], but the older British model of sepoys or local fighters paid strictly to bolster foreign forces with little if any concern about the local power balance. The same recipe was used in Afghanistan, Latin America and other proxy wars,” Robert Young Pelton told CorpWatch.

Anbar Awakening

The term “Emergency Response Unit” has also been used for various schemes that arm and equip local militias to fight Al Qaeda in Iraq under the auspices of the Ministry of the Interior. For example, some 2,500 men have been trained under such a scheme in Anbar province and another 800 in Babil province in the past year.(9)

But Lieutenant Colonel Michael Meese, an advisor to General David Petreaus, told CorpWatch that U.S. Special Forces were in charge of these ERU training schemes around the country, noting that they were different from the USIS training scheme at Camps Dublin and Solidarity.

Petraeus has personally lent his support by attending an ERU graduation ceremony in Hilla this past June.

The most widely touted example of U.S. Special Forces-trained ERU deployment has been in Anbar province, the vast western desert province that borders Jordan, Syria and Saudi Arabia, where Al Qaeda in Iraq and various sectarian forces are currently attacking Maliki government and occupation troops. In September 2006 Sheikh Abdul Sattar al-Rishawi, head of the Anbar Salvation Front, joined hands with the U.S.(31) The enemy-of-my-enemy alliance served al-Rishawi in various ways: It helped him fight off Al Quaeda of Iraq's attempt to undermine his tribal power, and it procured special training for his followers.

All told some 2,500 al-Rishawi supporters received U.S. Special Forces-provided ERU training. Touting Anbar's declining violence, including carjackings and bombings, the U.S. military and even Al-Maliki hailed the "Anbar Awakening" as a major step forward in combating "terrorism."

Al-Maliki made a much publicized trip to Ramadi, the provincial capital, in a show of support and solidarity with Al-Rishawi in March. Indeed it was his first trip to the city in 30 years and reporters were invited along to witness the new militias.

Monte Morin, a military reporter with the *Stars and Stripes* described an ERU he witnessed in Ramadi. "The units, which are armed but wear no standardized uniforms, have been issued pickup trucks and, in some cases, night-vision goggles. They draw pay from the Iraqi Ministry of Interior."

Like the USIS-trained ERU, these militias are backed up by the U.S. military. Morin described how Colonel Mohammed Rashid (an ex-Baathist), was put in charge of an ERU to patrol the 50-square-mile Jazeera suburb, beside the 1st Battalion of the 36th Infantry Regiment and the 1st Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division of the U.S. Army.(32)

Some say that providing ERU training to groups such as the Anbar Salvation Council is a dangerous game, given the council's history and the U.S. record of training groups such as the Afghan resistance that later turn their weapons and skills back on the U.S.

Lieutenant Colonel Richard Welch, a U.S. Army reserve officer in Baghdad who specializes in tribal and religious affairs, told the *Washington Post* that Al-Rishawi "made his living running a band of thieves who kidnapped and stopped and robbed people on the road between Baghdad and Jordan."(34) (This may help explain why violent robberies and bombings decreased when the Anbar Salvation Council took charge.)

Then there is the question of loyalty. "The question with a group like [the Anbar Salvation Council] always is, does it stay bought?" Anthony Cordesman, a military analyst at the Center for Strategic

and International Studies in Washington, told the *Washington Post*.

The Anbar success has been short-lived. In June, a suicide bomber blew himself up inside the Mansour hotel in Baghdad, killing a number of the sheikhs affiliated with the Anbar Salvation Council. In the last three months support for the group has crumbled.(33) Al-Rishawi himself was killed in a bomb attack on September 13, 2007, a week after meeting with President George Bush.

This article was made possible by a generous grant from the Hurd Foundation. It is the third in a series on the failure of reconstruction in Iraq. The first article, on healthcare in Iraq, may be read here: http://www.corpwatch.org/article.php?id=14290, and the second, on oil metering, may be read at http://www.corpwatch.org/article.php?id=14427. To contact the author, e-mail pratap@corpwatch.org

ENDNOTES:

1. Unit History of 1st Battalion, 5th Infantry Regiment, Task Force BobCat, 1 July 2005, Battalion Commander: LTC Todd McCaffrey
2. Author interview, July 2007
3. Andrew Rathmell, "Developing Iraq's Security Sector," RAND Corporation, December 2005
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- **Meet Gen. David Petraeus: His Militia Strategy Plunged Iraq Into a Civil War, And Now He's Back for More (A.K. Gupta 12 Sep 2007)**



Global Research, September 12, 2007

Gen. David H. Petraeus, the scholar-warrior tapped by Bush to salvage the U.S. war in Iraq, is settling in for the long war.

Having assumed command of all U.S. forces in Iraq earlier this year, Petraeus warns the war is not "going to be resolved in a year or even two years." In fact, he predicts that the counterinsurgency effort could last "at least nine or 10 years."

Petraeus is overseeing the escalation of 30,000 more troops, bringing U.S. troop levels to 155,000, near the highest levels of the whole war. (This has been matched by a big spike in American deaths with 126 in May alone, also near the highest levels.)

With a Ph.D. from Princeton University, he exemplifies the new breed of warrior who combines scholarly insight, cultural understanding and steely determination. Despite his high profile, Petraeus' record has largely escaped scrutiny. If any one general symbolizes the failure that is Iraq, it is Petraeus. Having served in multiple positions in Iraq since the 2003 invasion, Petraeus bears enormous responsibility for the Iraq debacle. And he hasn't seemed to have learned anything as he is replicating policies that deepened the quagmire in the first place.

Petraeus is green-lighting the funding and arming of Sunni militias in strife-wracked Al Anbar province for the stated purpose of routing Al Qaeda in Mesopotamia. But it is also part of the Bush administration's overall Middle East strategy.

Petraeus and the White House are forming Sunni militias apparently as a counterweight to Shiite militias and parties that it helped bring to power in Iraq and which they see as an Iranian fifth column.

THE IRANIAN HAND

Wherever the Bush administration looks in the Middle East, it sees an Iranian hand. This was not how it was supposed to be. Prior to the invasion of Iraq, neo-cons were crowing that "the road to Tehran runs through Baghdad." In the Gaza Strip, The White House labels Hamas an Iranian proxy; ditto for

Hizbullah in Lebanon. In Iraq, it describes various Shiite forces as in thrall to Iran's mullahs. In Afghanistan, it charges that Iranian weapons are flowing to the Taliban.

Its obsession has become self-fulfilling, turning these separate wars into a regional clash of Sunni versus Shiite. Even with Iraq, Afghanistan, Lebanon and Palestine locked in conflict and the spillover threatening to drag in neighboring countries, White House operatives are itching for the biggest fight of them all: a war against Iran.

END RUN

Steven Clemmons of thewashingtonnote.com wrote in late May of how Vice President Cheney and his staff were planning an "end run strategy" around Bush by colluding with Israel to launch a small-scale attack against Iran in the hopes it would strike back at U.S. forces in the Persian Gulf and ignite a full-blown war. Part of the strategy is to have neo-conservatives push publicly for war. John Bolton recently pronounced, "Regime change or the use of force are the only available options to prevent Iran from getting a nuclear weapons capability." And Commentary editor Norman Podhoretz fired his shot in an article entitled, "The Case for Bombing Iran."

Former U.S. Ambassador to Israel Martin Indyk told Seymour Hersh, "The White House is not just doubling the bet in Iraq. It's doubling the bet across the region." Hersh writes that this amounts to a "new strategy" termed a "redirection." It's bringing "the United States closer to an open confrontation with Iran and, in parts of the region, propelled it into a widening sectarian conflict between Shiite and Sunni Muslims." He adds, "A by-product of these activities has been the bolstering of Sunni extremist groups that espouse a militant vision of Islam and are hostile to America and sympathetic to Al Qaeda."

This is the situation in Iraq.

THE PETRAEUS FILES

In June 2004, Petraeus took the assignment of organizing training for all Iraqi military and police forces following their collapse during the Shiite and Sunni uprisings two months earlier.

During this period he was instrumental in forming government-sponsored militias throughout Iraq that operate as anti-Sunni death squads to this day, and which have plunged the nation into civil war. In the fall of 2004, Petraeus was arming, equipping and funding the Special Police Commandos, calling them "a horse to back."

Petraeus said he aided them because, "I want to get the hell out of here."

But rather than taking over the fight, the commandos (renamed the national police) have become another side in the war, operating as Shiite-run death squads. By early 2005 the 10,000-strong Special Police Commandos were reportedly disappearing, torturing and murdering Sunni men. Investigative reports detailed scores of incidents in which Sunni men who were detained by the commandos were later found tortured and killed. This death squad activity was going on under Petraeus' command, and was a critical factor in turning the Sunni Arab community wholesale against the Iraqi government. His role in the $15 billion U.S. effort to train the 350,000 Iraqi security forces on the books is even more dismal.

Writing in the Washington Post in September 2004, Petraeus argued "18 months after entering Iraq, I see tangible progress. Iraqi security elements are being rebuilt from the ground up." He spoke glowingly of Iraqi leaders "stepping forward, leading their country and their security forces courageously," and listed the various outfits that were being trained "to shoulder more of the load for their own security."

Exactly one year later, as Petraeus was packing his bags to assume a new command stateside, of the nearly 100,000 Iraqi troops that had been "trained," only one battalion was capable of independent combat operations. In June of 2007, with the latest U.S. escalation complete, all talk of Iraqi security forces "taking over the fight" has disappeared. And so have Iraqi units, which are plagued with a desertion and absentee rate of more than 25 percent.

These days it seems the only Iraqis in the fight are either in death squads or attacking U.S. forces. Just a few months ago, The New York Times reported that Iraqi police have been caught cooperating with insurgents planting improvised explosive devices used against Americans while Iraqi soldiers have been killed in combat against U.S. troops in Baghdad.

COUNTERINSURGENCY

In late 2005 Petraeus assumed command at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, where he oversaw training programs for the entire U.S. Army. While there, he also co-wrote the U.S. military's first manual on counterinsurgency warfare in 20 years. His recommendations included setting up "Specialized paramilitary strike forces," "home guards to provide local security" and "paramilitary units."

This is precisely the strategy in setting up Sunni militias in Anbar province under the umbrella of the "Anbar Salvation Council." This is an old strategy, one with a grim historical record.

The New York Times observes that "providing weapons to breakaway rebel groups is not new in counterinsurgency warfare, and that in places where it has been tried before, including the French colonial war in Algeria, the British-led fight against insurgents in Malaya in the early 1950s, and in

Vietnam, the effort often backfired, with weapons given to the rebels being turned against the forces providing them."

BLOWBACK AGAIN

In the Ramadi region, Petraeus endorsed a plan to arm and pay thousands of irregular forces that have all the makings of Sunni militias. Many of the Sunni groups the military is reaching out to "have had past links to Al Qaeda in Mesopotamia." Like their Shiite militia counterparts, there is the "possibility that some local leaders are using newly armed tribal members as their personal death squads to settle old scores."

This is entirely a Pentagon effort. Eight policemen told the Washington Post that "the U.S. military was giving them weapons, money and other materials such as uniforms, body armor, helmets and pickup trucks [and] paying salaries of up to $900 a month to tribal fighters."

The New York Times notes that "some American officers" say arming Sunni groups, "could amount to the Americans' arming both sides in a future civil war." There is the risk "that any weapons given to Sunni groups will eventually be used against Shiites or against the Americans themselves."

In fact, this looks to be deliberate observes the Times: "the Americans seem to have concluded that as long as the Shiites maintain their militias, Shiite leaders are in a poor position to protest the arming of Sunni groups." One aide to the Iraqi Prime Minister blasted the American strategy, "We have enough militias in Iraq that we are struggling now to solve the problem. Why are we creating new ones?"

The Shiite parties should be concerned because U.S. commanders are encouraging the Sunni militias to go after the Mahdi Army, which is affiliated with the powerful Shiite cleric Muqtada al-Sadr.

According to the Washington Post, this past July, a Sunni leader of one of the "neighborhood protection groups" in Baghdad told U.S. Army Col. Ricky D. Gibbs that his militia would, "clear the neighborhood of anyone who belongs to al-Qaeda or JAM [Jaish al-Mahdi or Mahdi Army] or even carries a bullet. We want you, sir, to give us the green light. They are ready."

While dispensing the usual warning of "You can't just shoot anybody," Gibbs told the Sunni leader, "You have the green light," and added, as for "the bad guys -- I don't care. Go get them."

This is the twisted landscape of the Iraq War. What began as a war to remake the Middle East has boomeranged. The Bush administration is fighting the Iraq War as an extension of the regional disaster it has spawned. Its goal is not even to stabilize Iraq, it is to create more chaos so as to counter Iran, Shiite movements and the broad array of Sunni-based resistance groups.

None of this would be possible if the home front were not blissed out on shopping and celebrities. Bush may only have 16 more months to go, but the domestic disconnect - why oppose Bush's wars when he's headed out the door? - gives the administration freedom to fan the flames of war in the Middle East.

A.K. Gupta is an editor of The Indypendent newspaper, a bimonthly based in New York. He is currently writing a book on the history of the Iraq War to be published by Haymarket Press.

- **Divide et Impera (Stephen Gowans 22 Aug 2007)**

Global Research, August 22, 2007 - Gowans.wordpress.com

The US is using a hoary imperial tactic dating back to the Romans to dominate Iraq and to justify a long-term military presence in the country

A US-financed program to build a Sunni paramilitary Guardian organization in Iraq, and US proposals for a soft partition of the country, are the latest steps in a divide and rule strategy the US is pursuing to keep Iraqis fighting among themselves so they won't fight the occupation. Sectarian strife also provides the US with the pretext it needs to establish a long-term military presence in the country.

The US occupation authority has made ethnicity and religion salient in Iraq, where once it was a matter of little moment in the daily political lives of Iraqis. The US organized elections and the army along sectarian lines. It decided which parties could run in elections, favoring those that emphasized religious affiliations (Sunni vs. Shia) and ethnicity (Arab vs. Kurd), while banning the largest non-sectarian party, the Baath party. Key government positions were doled out along sectarian lines. The interior ministry was turned over to the Badr Brigade, a sectarian Shia paramilitary organization. From head to toe, Iraq has been transformed from a secular society into one in which religious and ethnic identity matter. Imagine the Department of Homeland Security being turned over to the KKK, the Pentagon to Louis Farrakhan's Nation of Islam, while the Democrat and Republican parties are banned and replaced by religious and ethnic parties. If ever there was a recipe to get people fighting among themselves, this is it.

The most recent manifestation of the US divide and rule policy is a program to create a Sunni paramilitary Guardian force whose mandate is to protect Sunni neighborhoods (1). Imagine Washington creating a Black paramilitary Guardian force, a White paramilitary Guardian force, and a Hispanic paramilitary Guardian force in the US. The effect in sparking racial tension would be the same.

Now, some US policy makers are talking about partitioning Iraq into Kurd, Sunni and Shia regions. Leading advocates include senior politicians and US ruling class foundations. Joseph Biden, chairman of the US Foreign Relations Committee and a candidate for the Democratic presidential nomination endorses "soft" partition, as does Leslie Gelb, president emeritus of the influential Council on Foreign Relations (2). Last year, the two put together the Biden-Gelb plan, which calls for a "soft" partition of Iraq. Soft partition would see Iraq divided into three distinct ethno-religious regions: Kurdistan, Shiastan and Sunnistan, held together by a weak federal government.

Michael O'Hanlon, a senior fellow at the Brookings Institution, argues the "time may be approaching when the only hope for a more stable Iraq is soft partition (3)." The Brookings Institution, associated with the Rockefellers, is one of the most influential US ruling class policy-making organizations.

Western politicians portray Iraq as a country whose simmering sectarian tensions were held in check by the brutal repression of Saddam Hussein, a Sunni who ruled on behalf of the Sunni population and its political vehicle, the Baath party. It's only now that Mr. Hussein's tyranical rule has ended that sectarian conflict has slipped its restraints and come to the surface. At least, that's the favored US view. Trouble is, it's a crock of shit. When "the Committee of Debaathification issued a list of 100,000 senior Iraqi Baathists who would not be allowed to enjoy government posts," 66,000 of them turned out to be Shiites (4). And anyone who cared to check the deck of cards used to list the 55 top Iraqi officials the US invasion force wanted dead or alive, would discover that half were Shiite, and the remainder a mix of Sunnis, Christians and Kurds (5).

The former Ottoman territory that is now Iraq was governed as a single territory before 1880. The three provinces that were pieced together in 1921 to form modern Iraq had no "clear sectarian identities (6)." "For much of Iraq's history, the two communities (Shia and Sunni) co-existed peacefully (7)."

Partitioning the country would be no mean feat. "The geographic boundaries do not run toward partition. There is no Sunnistan or Shiastan." On the contrary, conditions are "highly commingled" with people "totally intermixed, especially in the major cities (8)." Five million Iraqis would have to be moved were the country to be divided into homogeneous ethno-religious slices (9).

More importantly, most Iraqis don't want their country partitioned. "Apart from the Kurds in the north, there is no unanimous, popular demand for federalism or soft partition or any partition at all (10)."

The 1920 Revolution Brigades, one of three resistance groups to form the political office of the Iraqi resistance, rejects the idea of a sectarian division in Iraq. "Our position," says its spokesman, "is that there are two kinds of people in Iraq: not Sunni and Shia, Kurdish and Arab, Muslim and Christian,

but those who are with the occupation and those who are against it (11)." Sectarian divisions in Iraq have been amplified, he says, "as part of the 'British imperial tactic of divide and rule (12).'"

The British employed the Roman principle of divide et impera to enslave colonial peoples. The US has taken up the tradition. "Our endeavour," remarked Lieutenant-Colonel Coke, Commandant of Moradabad during the middle of the nineteenth century, "should be to uphold in full force the (for us fortunate) separation which exists between the different religions and races, not to endeavour to amalgamate them. *Divide et impera* should be the principle of Indian government (13)." Lord Elphinstone, Governer of Bombay, seconded the motion. "*Divide et impera* was the old Romon motto, and it should be ours (14)."

Adumbrating US imperial tactics in Iraq, the British devised a system of separate electorates in India and separate representation by religion, caste and ethnicity. Sound familiar? "The effect of this electoral policy," observed one commentator, was "to give the sharpest possible stimulus to communal antagonism (15)." Prior to British rule in India there was no trace of the type of Hindu-Muslim conflict that later emerged under British rule (16).

"There is no natural inevitable difficulty from the cohabiting of differing races or religions in one country (17)." Mulsim and Hindu lived side-by-side peacefully until the British arrived in India; Sunni and Shiite commingled peacefully before the US imposed its occupation on the country. "The difficulties arise from social-political conditions. They arise, in particular, whenever a reactionary regime is endeavouring to maintain itself against the popular movement (18)."

In the USSR, diverse religions and races lived together amicably. Germans and Jews lived together peacefully under Germany's Weimar Republic. It wasn't until the Nazis emphasized national identity to weaken growing working class consciousness that systematic persecution of Jews began.

The strategy is simple. The last thing an occupying power wants is for the people it's dominating to recognize their common situation and interests. Were they to do that, they might mobilize their energies to fight their common enemy. So occupied countries are organized by their occupiers along color, religious and ethnic fault-lines. Iraqis mustn't think of themselves as Iraqis, but as Shiites, Sunnis and Kurds, locked in a struggle with each other for access to resources.

The same is true within imperialist countries. People who work for a living mustn't identify with their class, but with their ethnic, religious or racial cohorts, or must be imbued with patriotism, so that they equate their personal interests with those of their ruling class. In this way, Americans and Britons who have nothing to gain personally from their country's occupation of Iraq, and much to lose, are bamboozled into supporting the war. Likewise, employees who have much to gain from coming together as a class are diverted by racism, religion and patriotism.

Another thing the US *divide et impera* tactic provides is an excuse to maintain a military presence in Iraq, and therefore, the continued domination of Iraq by Washington. For liberals, the argument that the US can't leave Iraq now, otherwise a full-scale civil war will erupt, is decisive. But what this view ignores is that the possibility of a full-scale civil war is the product of the occupation itself. Had the US not fomented ethnic and religious divisions, the possibility of a civil war would never have arisen. On the other hand, were the US to cease efforts to pit Iraqi against Iraqi, the occupation – already greatly challenged by the resistance, despite US divide and rule tactics – would surely be defeated, an outcome the US will never willingly consent to. Soft partition, then, seems to those seeking both sectarian peace and US withdrawal, to be the answer. But slicing the country up into Sunnistan, Shiastan and Kurdistan, won't set the stage for a US pull-out. On the contrary, "senior military planners caution that should partition become American policy, withdrawal almost certainly wouldn't. Partition would require a stabilization force – code for American military presence – of 75,000 to 100,000 troops for years to come (19)." Heads I win, tails you lose. No matter what, the US figures to be hanging around Iraq for a long time, using sectarian tensions as the justification for its ongoing presence. What will foil these plans are non-sectarian groups, like the 1920 Revolution Brigades, that recognize there are only two kinds of people in Iraq: those who are with the occupation and those who are against it.

Notes

1. New York Times, August 19, 2007.
2. The CFR brings together CEOs, government and military officials and scholars, to recommend policy to the US State Department. The policy recommendations are typically responses to problems identified in corporate boardrooms, or exclusive clubs catering to the ultra-wealthy. The State Department relies on very little internal expertise, and uses the ruling class funded, directed and staffed think tanks and foundations to suggest policy. The CFR is the most important and influential of these organizations in matters of US foreign relations. See G. William Dumhoff, Who Rules America? McGraw-Hill, 2005.
3. New York Times, August 19, 2007.
4. Workers World, February 11, 2007.
5. Ibid.
6. Reidar Visser, who studies Iraq's sectarian issues at the Norwegian Institute of International Affairs, quoted in New York Times, August19, 2007.
7. New York Times, March 26, 2006.
8. Joost Hilterman, deputy director of Middle East programs for the International Crisis Group, quoted in New York Times, August 19, 2007.
9. New York Times, August 19, 2007.
10. Hilterman.
11. Guardian (UK), July 19, 2007.

12. Ibid.
13. R. Palme Dutt, The Problem of India, International Publishers, New York, 1943, p. 98.
14. Ibid.
15. Ibid., p. 101.
16. Ibid. p. 97.
17. Ibid.
18. Ibid.
19. New York Times, August 19, 2007.

- **Ordered Assassinations, Sectarian Bomb Attacks Targeting Iraqi Civilians (Amsi 12 May 2007)**



Former collaborator discloses details of US-ordered assassinations, sectarian bomb attacks targeting Iraqi civilians

An Iraqi who asked not to be identified had disclosed some of the US activities such as assassinations and bombings in markets that aim at sparking sectarian fighting among Iraqis so as to facilitate the partition of the country.

He pointed out that he that he worked with the US occupation troops for about two and a half years and then was able to flee from them to an area outside Baghdad where, he hopes, the Americans will not be able to get to him.

The former Iraqi collaborator recalled: "I was a soldier in the Iraqi army in the war of 1991 and during the withdrawal from Kuwait I decided to seek asylum in Saudi Arabia along with dozens of others like me. That was how began the process whereby I was recruited into the American forces, for there were US military committees that chose a number of Iraqis who were willing to volunteer to join them and be transported to America. I was one of those," he said.

The former collaborator went on: "In 1992 I was taken to America, specifically to an island where most of the establishments were military. I was with a number of other Iraqis, one of them the former governor of an-Najaf, 'Adnan adh-Dharfi. We received military training and intense courses in English and in how to carry out tasks like assassination," he recounted.

The former collaborator said that during the 2003 invasion and subsequent war, he was transported back to the interior of Iraq to carry out specific tasks assigned him by the US agencies.

"During the last war that led to the occupation of Iraq," he recalled, "I was with a group of my comrades who had received training in America in how to spread chaos in the ranks of the Iraqi army. We were brought into Iraq across the border from Saudi Arabia. We put on Iraqi army uniforms and out mission was basically to spread rumors among the Iraqis, such as that the American army had already got into such-and-such a city, or that it is on the outskirts of Baghdad and other such things, which were part of the reason for the rapid collapse of the Iraqi forces," he said.

The former collaborator went on: "the unit that I was with settled in the presidential palace in the al-A'zamiyah district. We were allowed to visit our relatives and relations in Baghdad once a month, and so I would go visit my family in 'Madinat as-Sadr' in eastern Baghdad. But after things began to get worse and the armed men began to shot at everyone leaving the palace, I asked my family to come to the palace every now and then so I could see them. My job was being a guard, but after a time that situation changed and the American occupation forces put me in charge of a group of a unit that carried out assassinations in the streets of Baghdad," he said.

"Our task was to carry out assassinations of individuals. The US occupation army would supply us with their names, pictures, and maps of their daily movements to and from their place of residence and we were supposed to kill the Shi'i, for example, in the al-A'zamiyah, and kill the Sunni in the of 'Madinat as-Sadr', and so on."

"Anyone in the unit who made a mistake was killed. Three members of my team were killed by US occupation forces after they failed to assassinate Sunni political figures in Baghdad. A US force that had been so-ordered eliminated them. That took place two years ago," the former collaborator recalled.



The former collaborator said that the Americans have a unit for "dirty jobs." That unit is a mix of Iraqis, Americans, and foreigners and of the security detachments that are deployed in Baghdad and other Iraqi cities. This unit doesn't only carry out assassinations, but some of them specialize in planting bombs and car bombs in

neighborhoods and markets. This unit carries out operations in which wanted people whom the American army does not want killed are arrested.

The former collaborator said that "operations of planting car bombs and blowing up explosives in markets are carried out in various ways, the best-known and most famous among the US troops is placing a bomb inside cars as they are being searched at checkpoints. Another way is to put bombs in the cars during interrogations. After the desired person is summoned to one of the US bases, a bomb is place in his car and he is asked to drive to a police station or a marked for some purpose and there his car blows up."

The testimony of the former collaborator is consistent with some western reports that have disclosed the involvement of US military personnel in bombings that target Iraqi civilians. The British reporter Robert Fisk, AMSI noted, had recently met with Iraqis in Syria concerning such "black operations" carried out by the Americans.

The Egyptian writer and former editor of al-Ahram, Muhammad Hasanayn Haykal, also noted in an interview with al-Jazeera satellite TV that there are mercenaries who practically make up an army second only to the regular US army in Iraq in terms of their numbers and equipment. This force is now called the "Knights of Malta" Haykal said, and they are the cause of many of the attacks that target Iraqi civilians. Haykal noted that there are Iraqis and Lebanese working in the ranks of that force.

- **Spying in Baghdad: The CIA's Real Mission Impossible, 19 Jan 2007**

By Jeff Stein, CQ National Security Editor

Many years ago, when I was a young Army Intelligence operative in South Vietnam, I had a daily routine to see if my spies had any new information for me.

I'd drive by a soccer stadium in Danang, the large coastal city where I lived, and I'd look for a particular mark on the wall. If it was there, I'd go to a prearranged place at a set time for a clandestine meeting with a go-between.

Many times the pick-up place was a pleasant beach about a mile from my house.

The war was raging in the jungles and rice paddies less than 10 miles away, and communist agents were everywhere in the city. But security was good enough that they weren't likely to risk exposing themselves by kidnapping or killing me.

My secret courier was a young boy who would come along selling ice cream from a box slung over his shoulder. I'd buy a cone wrapped in rice paper, and drive away. Back at the office, I'd unroll the paper to decipher my spy's tiny handwriting.

Baghdad is nothing like that.

The chaotic, ubiquitous violence of Baghdad has kept the CIA indoors.

According to several well informed intelligence sources, hundreds of CIA operatives have become virtual prisoners in the Green Zone, the sprawling American enclave whose high walls and guards separate the U.S. embassy, military command and related civilian agencies from the raging sectarian violence in Baghdad's streets.

The CIA operatives cannot safely roam the city to meet their few agents, much less recruit new ones.

It's just too dangerous. CIA chiefs don't want to risk one getting kidnapped, tortured on camera and beheaded.

That would certainly dampen the allure of a career in the CIA.

So "they spend their days playing cards and watching DVDs," said a former senior CIA operations official who maintains close ties in the agency.

No Casualties

CIA spokesman Paul Gimigliano rejected such characterizations.

"Agency officers throughout Iraq take risks each day to gather intelligence that makes a critical difference to our country," he said in an e-mail.

"Many of our officers in Iraq operate outside the Green Zone every day," he added. "To say that violence has 'kept the CIA indoors' is simply wrong.

But one barometer of the CIA's caution critics point to is the lack of agency casualties in the war, which has killed more than 3,000 U.S. military personnel and wounded 25,000 more.

Not a single CIA "case officer," spy jargon for espionage operative, has been killed in Iraq, a half dozen former senior CIA officers with close knowledge of the situation there told me.

(A civilian construction manager gunned down near Baghdad by masked insurgents in 2004 might have been an undercover CIA agent, said a retired military intelligence officer, but that could not be immediately confirmed. The CIA, of course, never discusses personnel issues.)

A handful of CIA case officers have been wounded in Iraq, the sources said, including a female who survived being shot by a sniper.

But the absence of casualties speaks volumes, the sources said.

"Without being overly harsh, it really says that they are risk averse, more so than our troops," says a senior Defense Department counterterrorism manager. "They are in armored vehicles, they convoy out of the bases that they live on."

Reports of the CIA's difficulty in getting out of the Green Zone to recruit and manage spies in Baghdad are so widespread that John D. Negroponte, the outgoing director of National Intelligence, was asked about it during a hearing of the House Intelligence Committee last Thursday, Jan. 18.

"What do you say to the criticism that I've heard from some agents that the value of the intelligence in Iraq is somewhat diluted by the fact that many of our agents are bottled up in the Green Zone . . ." Rep. John F. Tierney, D-Mass., asked John D. Negroponte.

Tierney said he'd heard that "their deployments are maybe too short . . . that there are too few Arabists, and that in some instances it's claimed that we [can't] even fully identify the number of different insurgent groups or [are not able] to identify which insurgent groups might be responsible for which insurgent acts."

"Actually," responded Negroponte, U.S. ambassador to Iraq for 10 months in 2004-2005, "our posture is sometimes better than we're given credit for. Secondly, not everybody's bottled up in the Green Zone."

Negroponte, recently tapped to be Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice's deputy, declined to elaborate in open session.

Stillborn

But multiple CIA sources, who spoke freely only in exchange for anonymity, said the agency's mission of recruiting and managing human spies in Baghdad was stillborn in the weeks following the 2003 invasion and has never recovered, despite adding hundreds of personnel in the past few years.

That failure has virtually crippled U.S. strategic intelligence — inside information on the personalities and plans of the often hostile U.S.-backed government, not just the multiplying insurgent groups and armed militias — in Iraq.

"No one is recruiting the future leaders of Iraq," says the Pentagon counterterrorism official.

Tactical intelligence — the locations and types of enemy troops and weapons — is also suffering from a lack of access to the population and almost nonexistent language skills on the part of both CIA and military intelligence personnel, say these same sources, all of whom have decades of experience in clandestine operations.

That limits "other covert ops, like providing detonators which will either not work or will explode prematurely in the hands of the bomb makers," said the counterterrorism official.

"When you're fighting an insurgency," says an ex-senior CIA operative who helped rout al Qaeda and the Taliban in Afghanistan, "you need hundreds and hundreds of informants."

Says CIA spokesman Gimiliano: "We know better than anyone the gaps in our knowledge about Iraq. But we also know that CIA's achievements there are rooted not in the Green Zone, but in the 'Red Zone' beyond.

"Some of that information is tactical, helping save the lives of American and Iraqi soldiers, and some is strategic, helping our government understand trends in the region."

Turmoil

The CIA has had three chiefs of station in Baghdad since U.S. troops pulled down the statue of Saddam Hussein on Apr. 9, 2003.

The first was a longtime operative and senior official who grew up in the Middle East in the 1950s, the son of a CIA legend in the agency's early "Good Shepherd" days.

Now retired himself, the official, whose name is being voluntarily withheld here, was CIA station chief in Cairo, among other Middle East assignments over the decades, before being dispatched to Iraq.

"He was chosen to be the first to go into Baghdad and set things up not just because he knew the region so well, but because he's such a nice guy, he can get along with the military really well, and he knows the Arabs and the area," said a longtime colleague.

The CIA thought it would be a small office, since U.S. officials envisioned a short war and occupation.

"They really planned a station for only about 40 people," said the colleague, who was also tasked with working on Iraq.

"They went in there in May and expected to be home by the end of June. They said, 'Don't worry about it, this whole thing, the military operation, is going to be over in May.' "

"And then the situation deteriorated," the former official said. "By the fall they saw they needed a much bigger station."

The CIA then dispatched a much younger officer, who spoke Arabic but whose administrative experience was limited to running the agency's small station in Kuwait, said the source, in an account backed up by another top CIA veteran of post-9/11 counterterrorism campaigns.

In 2004 the station began swelling to its current staffing of about 500 operatives, technicians and other support personnel.

Scores of case officers were borrowed from Washington or elsewhere, particularly Europe and Africa, for short stints in Iraq, CIA sources said.

Many were out of shape and lacked basic military skills, said a source with first-hand knowledge of the situation.

They got two weeks' combat orientation.

"They were overweight case officers from Geneva who we gave bandoleers and shotguns and then send them to Baghdad," the source said.

In 2003 the Abu Ghraib prison abuse pictures surfaced, involving the CIA in the scandal.

"They felt he was in over his head," the source said of the station chief. "They took him out and replaced him with a more senior officer."

But before the second station chief left Baghdad that November, he filed a report that starkly contradicted the optimistic claims about Iraq by top administration officials.

Inevitably, it leaked.

"It pulled no punches in detailing how the new insurgency was gaining strength from the political and economic vacuum that the United States had allowed to develop in Baghdad," New York Times reporter James Risen wrote.

"For his honesty, the station chief was subjected to inflammatory accusations about his personal behavior, all of which he flatly denied," and "quit the CIA in disgust."

The Baghdad station's third — and current — chief previously headed the CIA office in Kabul.

He also speaks Arabic, but presides over hundreds of operatives who cannot speak the local language or go anywhere.

Ray of Sunshine

The situation isn't entirely bleak.

Many of the CIA's young post-9/11 recruits are smart and tough and eager to get into the war, said a senior CIA veteran of Afghanistan.

"They're good, real good," he said.

But most of them, especially former Special Forces and Delta Force commandos, are employed in the CIA's paramilitary branch and pretty much doing what they were doing before in Iraq: Conducting raids to disrupt terrorist attacks and snatch "high value targets," from insurgent leaders to Iranian operatives.

Military spy services have tried to fill the intelligence vacuum, informed sources said, but they face the same dangerous streets and language deficits as the CIA.

"I heard about one personal meeting a case officer had with an agent," said an amazed former CIA operator. "They rendezvoused in armored Humvees on a neighborhood street. That's ridiculous."

On the rare occasions that Americans walk the streets of Baghdad, they attract unwanted attention, intelligence sources say..

Meantime, Iraqis risk their lives being identified with U.S. troops or intelligence agents.

If they can't risk being seen with an American, it's nearly impossible for the CIA to contact and assess them for recruitment.

Working through third parties — say, another Iraqi — risks losing control of the informant. It also opens up the operation to enemy penetration via double agents.

"Given the events of the past three years . . . the agency's utility in such an environment is questionable," says former Delta Force operative John Rollins, who up until last year was the Department of Homeland Security's chief of staff for intelligence.

Most likely, he thinks, the CIA would reserve the "few Americans that can blend into the environment or speak the language" for "safer activities or missions where the payoff is significant," such as trying to catch Osama bin Laden.

Talk about hard targets.

"Given the promises that were made and unfulfilled after Desert Storm [in 1991, when the first President Bush encouraged Iraqi Shiites to rebel against Saddam Hussein then stood aside as they were slaughtered] and questionable agency intelligence collection efforts leading up to this war," Rollins said, "few locals may wish to be associated with the agency."

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Note: This update includes a statement from CIA spokesman Paul Gimigliano rejecting critical comments about the agency's Baghdad station.

First posted Jan. 19, 2007 8:08 p.m.

- **John Pilger detects the Salvador Option (03 May 2006)**

The American public is being prepared. If the attack on Iran does come, there will be no warning, no declaration of war, no truth, writes John Pilger

The lifts in the New York Hilton played CNN on a small screen you could not avoid watching. Iraq was top of the news; pronouncements about a "civil war" and "sectarian violence" were repeated incessantly. It was as if the US invasion had never happened and the killing of tens of thousands of civilians by the Americans was a surreal fiction. The Iraqis were mindless Arabs, haunted by religion, ethnic strife and the need to blow themselves up. Unctuous puppet politicians were paraded with no hint that their exercise yard was inside an American fortress.

And when you left the lift, this followed you to your room, to the hotel gym, the airport, the next

airport and the next country. Such is the power of America's corporate propaganda, which, as Edward Said pointed out in Culture and Imperialism, "penetrates electronically" with its equivalent of a party line.

The party line changed the other day. For almost three years it was that al-Qaeda was the driving force behind the "insurgency", led by Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, a bloodthirsty Jordanian who was clearly being groomed for the kind of infamy Saddam Hussein enjoys. It mattered not that al-Zarqawi had never been seen alive and that only a fraction of the "insurgents" followed al-Qaeda. For the Americans, Zarqawi's role was to distract attention from the thing that almost all Iraqis oppose: the brutal Anglo-American occupation of their country.

Now that al-Zarqawi has been replaced by "sectarian violence" and "civil war", the big news is the attacks by Sunnis on Shia mosques and bazaars. The real news, which is not reported in the CNN "mainstream", is that the Salvador Option has been invoked in Iraq. This is the campaign of terror by death squads armed and trained by the US, which attack Sunnis and Shias alike. The goal is the incitement of a real civil war and the break-up of Iraq, the original war aim of Bush's administration. The ministry of the interior in Baghdad, which is run by the CIA, directs the principal death squads. Their members are not exclusively Shia, as the myth goes. The most brutal are the Sunni-led Special Police Commandos, headed by former senior officers in Saddam's Ba'ath Party. This unit was formed and trained by CIA "counter-insurgency" experts, including veterans of the CIA's terror operations in central America in the 1980s, notably El Salvador. In his new book, Empire's Workshop (Metropolitan Books), the American historian Greg Grandin describes the Salvador Option thus: "Once in office, [President] Reagan came down hard on central America, in effect letting his administration's most committed militarists set and execute policy. In El Salvador, they provided more than a million dollars a day to fund a lethal counter-insurgency campaign . . . All told, US allies in central America during Reagan's two terms killed over 300,000 people, tortured hundreds of thousands and drove millions into exile."

Although the Reagan administration spawned the current Bushites, or "neo-cons", the pattern was set earlier. In Vietnam, death squads trained, armed and directed by the CIA murdered up to 50,000 people in Operation Phoenix. In the mid-1960s in Indonesia CIA officers compiled "death lists" for General Suharto's killing spree during his seizure of power. After the 2003 invasion, it was only a matter of time before this venerable "policy" was applied in Iraq.

According to the investigative writer Max Fuller (National Review Online), the key CIA manager of the interior ministry death squads "cut his teeth in Vietnam before moving on to direct the US military mission in El Salvador". Professor Grandin names another central America veteran whose job now is to "train a ruthless counter-insurgent force made up of ex-Ba'athist thugs". Another, says Fuller, is

well-known for his "production of death lists". A secret militia run by the Americans is the Facilities Protection Service, which has been responsible for bombings. "The British and US Special Forces," concludes Fuller, "in conjunction with the [US-created] intelligence services at the Iraqi defence ministry, are fabricating insurgent bombings of Shias."

On 16 March, Reuters reported the arrest of an American "security contractor" who was found with weapons and explosives in his car. Last year, two Britons disguised as Arabs were caught with a car full of weapons and explosives; British forces bulldozed the Basra prison to rescue them. The Boston Globe recently reported: "The FBI's counter-terrorism unit has launched a broad investigation of US-based theft rings after discovering that some of the vehicles used in deadly car bombings in Iraq, including attacks that killed US troops and Iraqi civilians, were probably stolen

in the United States, according to senior government officials."

As I say, all this has been tried before - just as the preparation of the American public for an atrocious attack on Iran is similar to the WMD fabrications in Iraq. If that attack comes, there will be no warning, no declaration of war, no truth. Imprisoned in the Hilton lift, staring at CNN, my fellow passengers could be excused for not making sense of the Middle East, or Latin America, or anywhere. They are isolated. Nothing is explained. Congress is silent. The Democrats are moribund. And the freest media on earth insult the public every day. As Voltaire put it: "Those who can make you believe absurdities can make you commit atrocities."

- **About the assassination of Iraqi academics 22 April 2006 - Talk given at the International Seminar in Madrid 22-23 April 2006**

Dirk Adriaensens, B*Russell*s Tribunal

First let me congratulate the Spanish people for the fierce opposition against the war and occupation of Iraq. And the Spanish government that has listened to its people and has decided to withdraw from Iraq because it became clear that this war was based on lies and was illegal under international law.

The B*Russell*s Tribunal was originally a hearing committee composed of academics, intellectuals and artists in the tradition of the Russell Tribunal, set up in 1967 to investigate war crimes committed during the Vietnam War. The B*Russell*s Tribunal was directed against the war in Iraq and the imperial war policies of the Bush II administration. Its main focus was the 'Project for the New American Century', the think tank behind this war, in particular three of the co-signatories of the mission statement: Donald Rumsfeld, Dick Cheney and Paul Wolfowitz.



At a networking conference set up by the Bertrand Russell Peace Foundation at the end of June 2003 in Brussels, it was decided that a series of hearings would be held in different places all over the world, culminating in a final session in Istanbul. The BRussells Tribunal was one of these commissions of inquiry, the opening session of the World Tribunal on Iraq. The Bertrand Russell Peace Foundation accepted to support the initiative. The World Tribunal on Iraq evolved as a worldwide initiative and had Tribunal sessions and associated events in some 25 cities and countries worldwide. Many of the people present here were involved in the WTI and we are still cooperating, as this seminar shows. We work together on the basis of the platform text and the conclusions of the WTI.

After our Tribunal session, we were facing the question what to do next, how to proceed according to our conclusions. We decided to ACT. The ongoing atrocities in Iraq need our monitoring and the Iraqis need our support. A lot of our international friends, who organised similar events, share this viewpoint. That's why we established a cooperation and bundled our efforts. And let it be very clear: not only do we monitor the occupation, we act against the war, against the illegal occupation of the sovereign state of Iraq, and we support all attempts of the Iraqi people to regain its sovereignty. We are a citizen's initiative, meaning that we work independent from political parties.

This independent, consistent and effective way of working has attracted some fine and influential people like Harold Pinter, José Saramago, Eduardo Galeano, Samir Amin, Denis Halliday and Hans von Sponeck, Margarita Papandreou, Naomi Klein etc. It's an explosive mixture of academics, activists, lawyers, artists, journalists and intellectuals. They seem to believe in the format and the potential of this network. In a way it's reassuring, also for them, to belong to an active group and be able to discuss recent developments and actions. This is necessary in order to better understand the situation in Iraq. All these people are connected with each other and can ask or give advice, bring ideas to the forum, spread important news, and so we attempt to help the peace movement solve some difficult questions as f.i. should we support the resistance, should the MNF-I leave Iraq etc. We also act as a sort of hub to connect people. The way this committee works is a rather new concept, I don't know about any similar initiative. And it's very workable.

The backbone of our committee is composed of patriotic Iraqis, both from inside Iraq and from the Diaspora. They belong to different currents. We have the chairs from different Human Rights organisations, medical associations, academic associations inside Iraq. This choice wasn't made accidentally. They are better aware of the pitfalls. They know better than all of us the realities on the ground. They know better what has to be done in the current situation and can help on a different number of issues. They understand what's going on in Iraq. It's their country. If we want to spread correct information and viewpoints to the Western audiences, we need the Iraqis to advise us. The BRussells Tribunal is about THEIR country. So we want to be a bridge between the Iraqi and the Western peace movement. We publish regularly eyewitness accounts and Iraqi Human Rights reports

that we receive. That has helped us a lot because the situation of Iraq is extremely complicated for outsiders like us. We cannot make a decent analysis without their help or support.

Now, I tell all this to give you some background and a context of who we are and why we think we can speak with some authority about Iraqi issues.

About the Academics campaign

The pattern of academics assassinated appears to substantiate claims that a campaign exists and is being conducted to erase a key section of the secular middle class in Iraq — a class that has largely resisted the US occupation of Iraq and refused to be co-opted by the so-called "political process" or Iraq's US-installed puppet government. Academics are not the only ones being killed: 311 teachers killed the past 4 months, 182 pilots, 416 senior military officers killed in the first 3 months of 2006. 20.000 people kidnapped since the beginning of 2006.

It were the Iraqi intellectuals who asked us to start a campaign to create awareness for this problem.

When we started, it was clear we had to avoid some traps and pitfalls. I'll sum up a few of the most important.

1. we had to avoid complicity in any way with the occupying forces and its puppet government. We don't want to humanize this dreadful occupation. That's why we appeal to international human rights organisations and the UNHCHR to investigate this matter, and not to the Iraqi puppet government and the occupying forces, who are the perpetrators of these crimes.
2. We had to make sure to work with many different Iraqi anti-occupation organisations and individuals, in order to be as inclusive as possible.
3. We had to avoid putting this issue in the context of a sectarian strife between Sunni's and Shia. I will develop this point later.
4. We had to avoid to look at this issue as being a sort of revenge against academics of the previous government. The so-called Debaathification was the first step in the destruction of Iraq's educational system. It was used by the US to divide and destroy Iraq. Most of these so-called "revenge killings" that took place after the war can be attributed to the occupying forces and collaborators.
5. We had to counter the claims of the Iraqi puppet government, the US occupiers, and the recently started campaign to safeguard the Iraqi academics, backed by both the government of Iraq and UNESCO, that criminal gangs are committing these assassinations.
6. Also, we had to mention the possible role of the Mossad in these assassinations, even though we have no hard evidence to substantiate the many assertions that Israel in involved.

7. We have to carry out this campaign in the most effective and prudent way, in order not to put the Iraqi academics even in a more dangerous situation. This requires close contacts on the ground and a lot of consultation. We distributed questionnaires from UNHCHR to the families of the victims. Not one has returned until now. The reason that is being given is that the families are too afraid to openly accuse the perpetrators. They are even too afraid to ask the police for details about the crime.

We drafted our petition very carefully, in cooperation with the Iraqis of the B*Russell*s Tribunal network. The result is that besides over 8.000 academics worldwide, all the different patriotic currents and Iraqi anti-occupation movements have signed our petition. It was the first time something like this happened. So ours is a unifying rather than a divisive action.

Death Squads and the Salvador option

I would like to look into one major point of concern connected to this issue, and that is the so-called sectarian issue: some commentators claim that the assassination campaign of academics is part of a so-called civil war between Sunni and Shia. That's it's the ignorant Islamist Shia who receives direct orders from Iran to kill intellectual Sunni's, and that it is unfortunately beyond the control of the US now. And thus the occupying forces should remain in Iraq to restore law and order. Mainstream media are raising this smokescreen to hide the truth from getting out.

Another smokescreen is the claim that most of the assassinations are carried out by criminal gangs, who first kidnap their victims, and then a ransom is paid. And after that either they are assassinated, and if not, they flee the country.

I want to put this campaign in the context where it ought to be.

What we are witnessing is the result of a carefully planned US campaign to liquidate every Iraqi who opposes the occupation of his country, the so-called "Salvador option". In fact, since 1945 the U.S. developed counterinsurgency policies based on the model of Nazi suppression of partisan insurgents that emphasized placing the civilian population under strict control and using terror to make the population afraid to support or collaborate with insurgents.

On January 1 2004, Robert Dreyfuss stated that: "part of a secret $3 billion in new funds—tucked away in the $87 billion Iraq appropriation that Congress approved in early November 2003 — will go toward the creation of a paramilitary unit manned by militiamen associated with former Iraqi exile groups. Experts say it could lead to a wave of extrajudicial killings, not only of armed rebels but of nationalists, other opponents of the U.S. occupation and thousands of civilian Baathists—up to 120,000 of the estimated 2.5 million former Baath Party members in Iraq. "They're clearly cooking up joint teams to do Phoenix-like things, like they did in Vietnam," said Vincent Cannistraro, former CIA chief of

counter terrorism. The bulk of the covert money will support U.S. efforts to create a lethal, and revenge-minded, Iraqi security force. "The big money would be for standing up an Iraqi secret police to liquidate the resistance," said John Pike, an expert on classified military budgets at www.globalsecurity.org. "And it has to be politically loyal to the United States." It's also pouring money into the creation of an Iraqi secret police staffed mainly by gunmen associated with members of the puppet Iraqi Governing Council. Those militiamen are linked to Ahmad Chalabi's Iraqi National Congress (inc), the Kurdish peshmerga ("facing death") forces and Shiite paramilitary units, especially those of the Iran-backed Supreme Council for Islamic Revolution in Iraq. Technically illegal, these armed forces have been tolerated, even encouraged, by the Pentagon." End of quote.

This was written on the 1st of January 2004. Soon after this blood-money was drained to Iraq, the consequences of this secret operation became clear. According to an article published in New York Times Magazine, in September 2004, Counsellor to the US Ambassador for Iraqi Security Forces James Steele was assigned to work with a new elite Iraqi counter-insurgency unit known as the Special Police Commandos, formed under the operational control of Iraq's Interior Ministry.

Many of the same men in charge of training El Salvador's right-wing counter-insurgency forces during its bloody civil war are revealed to be advisors to Iraqi security forces.

Max Fuller, a specialist in Latin-America, has investigated this matter thoroughly. He writes: "From 1984 to 1986 then Col. Steele had led the US Military Advisory Group in El Salvador, where he was responsible for developing special operating forces at brigade level during the height of the conflict. These forces, composed of the most brutal soldiers available, replicated the kind of small-unit operations with which Steele was familiar from his service in Vietnam. Rather than focusing on seizing terrain, their role was to attack 'insurgent' leadership, their supporters, sources of supply and base camps. In military circles it was the use of such tactics that made the difference in ultimately defeating the guerrillas; for others, such as the Catholic priest Daniel Santiago, the presence of people like Steele contributed to another sort of difference:

"*People are not just killed by death squads in El Salvador – they are decapitated and then their heads are placed on pikes and used to dot the landscape. Men are not just disemboweled by the Salvadoran Treasury Police; their severed genitalia are stuffed into their mouths. Salvadoran women are not just raped by the National Guard; their wombs are cut from their bodies and used to cover their faces. It is not enough to kill children; they are dragged over barbed wire until the flesh falls from their bones, while parents are forced to watch. (Cited by Chomsky)*". The responsible person for these atrocities was John Negroponte, then Ambassador to Honduras from 1981-1985, appointed as US Ambassador in Baghdad.

Iraq's interior minister Bayan Jabr, has admitted death squads and other unauthorised armed groups have been carrying out sectarian killings in the country. In a BBC interview on April 11 2006, he denied these groups were his responsibility. He added that there are non-governmental armed groups called the Facility Protection Service, set up in 2003 by the U.S. occupation, that number 150,000 effectives. These 150,000 hired guns are "out of order, not under our control," along with another 30,000 private security guards, Jabr said.

But the prime minister, Ibrahim Jaafari, described the Badr organisation last summer as a "shield" defending Iraq, while the president, Jalal Talabani, claimed the Badr organisation and the peshmerga were patriots who "are important to fulfilling this sacred task, establishing a democratic, federal and independent Iraq".

John Pace, the outgoing head of the UN human rights office in Iraq, told the March 2 British Guardian that many killings were carried out by Shia militias linked to the interior ministry run by Bayan Jabr, a leading figure in the Supreme Council for the Islamic Revolution in Iraq (SCIRI)". SCIRI is the main party in the coalition of Shiite religious parties that heads the US-backed Iraqi government. "The Badr brigade [SCIRI's militia] are in the police and are mainly the ones doing the killing", said Pace. "They're the most notorious."

However, I tend to believe Bayan Jabr. I think he knows very well what's going on, but I believe him when he says these groups are not his responsibility, because I think that these militia's, who were created, financed, armed and trained by the occupying forces, are under the direct control of the US.

Steven Casteel works as a senior vice-president of Vance, a security company. "*Just prior to joining Vance, Mr. Casteel was selected by the White House to be Senior Advisor to Iraq's Ministry of Interior under the Coalition Provisional Authority and later the Department of State. In that capacity he advised former Ambassadors Bremer and Negroponte on non-military security matters, set policy, and led the creation and operations of the Ministry's critical services. Services included the new Iraqi Police, Border Police, Immigration, Customs Service, Civil Defense and Fire Programs. Responsibilities included recruitment, training, equipping, and deployment of services and personnel* " (http://www.vanceglobal.com/whoweare/leadership/casteel/). So he was involved in overseeing the training and creating of Iraqi police forces.

As a former top DEA man, he was involved in the hunt for Colombia's notorious cocaine baron Pablo Escobar, during which the DEA collaborated with a paramilitary organization known as *Los Pepes*, which later transformed itself into the AUC, an umbrella organization covering all of Colombia's paramilitary death squads.

Like Colombia's death squads, Iraq's Police Commandos deliberately cultivate a frightening paramilitary image. During raids they openly intimidate and brutalize suspects, even in the presence of foreign journalists. Significantly, many of the Commandos, including their leader, are Sunni Muslims.

Many of the highest-ranking officers in the Wolf brigade f.i. are Sunnis and, when asked about other minorities, Abul Waleed, a 41-year-old three-star general from the old regime, mentions Kurds and even a Yazidi, as members of these brigades. General Adnan Thabit, a Sunni and general under Saddam Hussein, is the leader of Iraq's Special Police Commandos.

Of course some of the sections of these militia's may follow an Iranian agenda, or a sectarian agenda, but if you look at the composition and actions of these death squads, they should certainly not be called "Shiite death squads", but "anti-resistance death squads".

Putting the primary blame for these killing on criminal gangs or on Iran, is serving the US interests in the region. Continuously linking "Shiite" to "death squads" also serves the US agenda by fuelling sectarian strife and so contributing to the deliberate disintegration of the country.

Many of the murdered academics are Shia, and what most of those killed academics have in common, is their opposition to the US occupation of Iraq.

Patrick Lang, former chief of Middle East analysis for the U.S. Defense Intelligence Agency says: "What those of us in El Salvador learned was that American policy might call for surgical action, but once the local troops are involved, they're as likely to use a chain-saw as a scalpel. And that, too, can serve American ends. In almost any counter-insurgency, the basic message the government or the occupiers tries to get across to the population is brutally simple: "We can protect you from the guerrillas, but the guerrillas can't protect you from us, and you've got to choose sides." Sometimes you can win the population's hearts and minds; sometimes you just have to make them more frightened of you than they are of the insurgents." And for this aim they use the Wolf Brigade, the Scorpions Brigade, the Lions Brigade, the Peshmerga's and the "security forces" of the Ministry of Interior.

We receive many eye-witness reports from inside Iraq. They are published on the B*Russell*s Tribunal website.

One report describes a case where people are arrested by the Badr Brigade, with the help of US forces and brought to secret prisons under the control of the Badr brigades.

Another report describes how in the aftermath of the bombing of the Askariyah shrine in Samarra, the village of Al Fursan, south of Baghdad, is ethnically cleaned by black-clad militias and police commandos while American tanks are standing by, watch what happens and don't interfere while people are being slaughtered, houses being burned.

The latest report dates from 17 of April. Men in police uniforms attacked the Al-Adhamiya neighbourhood in Baghdad. The Ministry of Interior claimed the uniformed men didn't belong to the puppet forces, but local residents are quite sure they were special forces from the Ministry of Interior, probably Badr brigades. The neighbourhood was sealed off and electricity was cut off. When the uniformed forces entered the neighbourhood, the National Guards that are usually patrolling the streets left. Young armed men from the neighbourhood fought side by side with mujahedin against the attacking forces to protect Al-Adhamiya. Several residents have been killed in the streets. US troops also entered the neighbourhood. At first, they only stood by and watched; later on they, too, fired at the locals, who tried to repel the attacks. These reports show that there is at least complicity of the US forces in the actions of the militia's.

These examples show that there is at least complicity of the US forces in the actions of the militia's.

To conclude I would like to denounce the total lack of interest in human lives by the occupying forces and the Western mainstream press. There is obviously a lot of racism involved in the way this occupation is handled by the MNF-I and covered by the media. Some of the academics assassinated were among the finest scientists not only in the Middle East, but worldwide. Nevertheless, none of these murders have been investigated, and very few commemorations appeared in the Western press when these famous academics were killed. And that is another crime.

Dirk Adriaensens.

Member B*Russell*s Tribunal Executive Committee

- **Thanks to Robert Dreyfuss ("Phoenix Rising", *http://brusselstribunal.org/ArticlesOnIraq.htm#Phoenix*) and Max Fuller (a.o. "For Iraq, "The Salvador Option" Becomes Reality", *http://globalresearch.ca/articles/FUL506A.html*) whose articles are extensively quoted**
- **A comprehensive dossier about death squads can be found as a PDF file: http://brusselstribunal.org/pdf/DeathSquads.pdf.**

* Additional sources (taken from: Death Squads in Iraq: A timeline)
www.dailykos.com/storyonly/2006/3/23/202410/772

January 14, 2005: Newsweek breaks the "Salvador Option' story. (Newsweek)

January 25, 2005: Human Rights Watch releases a damning report alleging torture and mistreatment of detainees by the new Iraqi government. (Human Rights Watch)

April 28, 2005: The new Iraqi government is approved. The Supreme Council for Islamic Revolution wins control of the Interior Ministry. The new minister is Bayan Jabr. (Juan Cole)(PBS)

May 1, 2005: Many of the same men in charge of training El Salvador's right-wing counter-insurgency forces during its bloody civil war are revealed to be advisors to Iraqi security forces. (NYT Magazine)

May 16, 2005 55 dead bodies are discovered in Iraq. (CNN)

May 22, 2005: An elite group of commandos known as the Wolf Brigade is profiled by Knight Ridder. The group is notorious for its brutal treatment of detainees.(Knight Ridder)

June 12, 2005: 20 bodies are found around Baghdad. Many of them show signs of torture. (CNN)

June 28, 2005: Numerous Sunni males turn up dead after being detained by men wearing police uniforms. (Knight Ridder)

July 7, 2005: Horrifying descriptions of torture by Iraqi security forces emerge. (The Observer)

September 8, 2005: The U.N. expresses concern over abuses by pro-government forces in Iraq. (Reuters)

September 16, 2005: CBS reports on the torture and execution of numerous Sunnis. (CBS News)

October 7, 2005: At least 537 bodies have been found since April, many of them Sunnis. (Associated Press)

October 12, 2005: Sectarian hatred extends itself into the Iraqi military. (Knight Ridder)

November 15, 2005: U.S. Forces discover a secret torture center run by Iraq's Interior Ministry. (Washington Post)

November 27, 2005: Former Iraqi Prime Minister Ayad Allawi claims that the human rights situation in Iraq is just as bad, if not worse, than it was under Saddam. (CNN)

November 28, 2005: Abuse of prisoners in Iraq is called routine. (Knight Ridder)

Interior Minister Bayan Jabr defends the alleged torture camp. (CNN)

November 29, 2005: The NY Times and LA Times both run stories about allegations of Shiites running death squads that target Sunnis. (Los Angeles Times)(New York Times)

December 11, 2005: Torture is discovered at a second Interior Ministry run prison in Iraq. (Washington Post)

December 27, 2006: US refuses to handover jails and prisons to Iraqis until conditions improve(Times Online)

January 22, 2006: Iraqis attempt to find officials without ties to militias. USA Today

January 25, 2006: Sunni leaders urge followers to defend against deadly house raids. (Knight Ridder)

February 5, 2006: 14 blindfolded tortured bodies found in Baghdad, called common occurrence. (Washington Post)

February 16, 2006: Iraq's government launches investigation into death squad claims after US general catches Iraqi policemen about to execute a Sunni. (BBC News)

February 22, 2006 Powerful blast destroys Golden Mosque in Samarra. Shiites swear revenge. (New York Times)

February 23, 2006: 47 predominantly Sunni workers are stopped at a checkpoint and massacred outside Baghdad. (Knight Ridder)

February 26, 2006: Andrew Buncombe and Patrick Cockburn report that hundreds of Iraqis are being tortured to death every month by Interior Ministry death squads. (The Independent)

February 28, 2006: Violence since mosque explosion kills more than 1,300 Iraqis. (Washington Post)

March 2, 2006: Director of the Baghdad morgue claims that up to 7,000 people have been killed by death squads in the past several months. (The Guardian)

March 8, 2006: the State Department criticizes the Iraqi government's human rights violations in its annual report. (State Department)

Gunmen dressed up as Interior Ministry commandos raid a private security company and abduct 50 people. A US Military patrol comes across a bus with the bodies of 18 men piled up inside. (Washington Post)

March 12, 2006: Iraqi officials admit to the existence of death squads operating from inside the government. (Knight Ridder)

March 14, 2006: Iraqi authorities find 80 dead bodies over the course of two days.(BBC News)

March 20, 2006: The US continues to arm and train the same Iraqi security forces accused of having a sectarian bent and committing numerous massacres. (Time)

March 22, 2006: The U.N. demands that the Iraqi government reign in their abusive security forces. (UN News Centre)



Col. James Steele and General Abul Waleed (Responsible person of the Wolf Brigade) in Samarra

- **Robert Fisk: Somebody is trying to provoke a civil war in Iraq. (03 March 2006)**

The real question I ask myself is: who are these people who are trying to provoke the civil war? Now the Americans will say it's Al Qaeda, it's the Sunni insurgents. It is the death squads. Many of the death squads work for the Ministry of Interior. Who runs the Ministry of Interior in Baghdad? Who pays the Ministry of the Interior? Who pays the militia men who make up the death squads? We do, the occupation authorities.

Broadcast: 03/02/2006 ABC - Australia - Lateline

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Roberst Fisk shares his Middle East knowledge

Reporter: Tony Jones

TONY JONES: Well, Robert Fisk is one of the most experienced observers of the Middle East and in his latest book, 'The Great War for Civilisation - the Conquest of the Middle East', he draws on almost 30 years of reporting from his base in Lebanon to look at the forces which have shaped current events and conflicts Robert Fisk, thanks for being there.

ROBERT FISK, WRITER & JOURNALIST: You're welcome.

TONY JONES: Now, unless you've changed your position in recent days, the one thing that you and President Bush agree on is there's not going to be a civil war in Iraq.

ROBERT FISK: Yeah, I listened to Bush. It made me doubt myself when I heard him say that. I still go along and say what I said before - Iraq is not a sectarian society, but a tribal society. People are intermarried. Shiites and Sunnis marry each other. It's not a question of having a huge block of people here called Shiites and a huge block of people called Sunnis any more than you can do the same with the United States, saying Blacks are here and Protestants are here and so on. But certainly, somebody at the moment is trying to provoke a civil war in Iraq. Someone wants a civil war. Some form of militias and death squads want a civil war. There never has been a civil war in Iraq. The real question I ask myself is: who are these people who are trying to provoke the civil war? Now the Americans will say it's Al Qaeda, it's the Sunni insurgents. It is the death squads. Many of the death squads work for the Ministry of Interior. Who runs the Ministry of Interior in Baghdad? Who pays the Ministry of the

Interior? Who pays the militia men who make up the death squads? We do, the occupation authorities. I'd like to know what the Americans are doing to get at the people who are trying to provoke the civil war. It seems to me not very much. We don't hear of any suicide bombers being stopped before they blow themselves up. We don't hear of anybody stopping a mosque getting blown up. We're not hearing of death squads all being arrested. Something is going very, very wrong in Baghdad. Something is going wrong with the Administration. Mr Bush says, "Oh, yes, sure, I talk to the Shiites and I talk to the Sunnis." He's talking to a small bunch of people living behind American machine guns inside the so-called Green Zone, the former Republican palace of Saddam Hussein, which is surrounded by massive concrete walls like a crusader castle. These people do not and cannot even leave this crusader castle. If they want to leave to the airport, they're helicoptered to the airport. They can't even travel on the airport road. What we've got at the moment is a little nexus of people all of whom live under American protection and talk on the telephone to George W Bush who says, "I've been talking to them and they have to choose between chaos and unity." These people can't even control the roads 50 metres from the Green Zone in which they work.

TONY JONES: OK.

ROBERT FISK: There's total chaos now in Iraq.

TONY JONES: Let's go back, if we can, to start answering that question about who wants civil war. Back one week to the bombing of the golden shrine in Samarra. Now, most people do think the only people with reasons for doing that would be the Al Qaeda in Iraq group led by al-Zarqawi. You don't agree?

ROBERT FISK: Well, I don't know if al-Zarqawi is alive. You know, al-Zarqawi did exist before the American Anglo-American invasion. He was up in the Kurdish area, which was not actually properly controlled by Saddam. But after that he seems to have disappeared. We know there's an identity card that pops up. We know the Americans say we think we've recognised him on a videotape. Who recognises him on a videotape? How many Americans have ever met al-Zarqawi? Al-Zarqawi's mother died more than 12 months ago and he didn't even send commiserations or say "I'm sorry to hear that". His wife of whom he was very possessive is so poor she has to go out and work in the family town of Zarqa. Hence the name Zarqawi. I don't know if al-Zarqawi is alive or exists at the moment. I don't know if he isn't a sort of creature invented in order to fill in the narrative gaps, so to speak. What is going on in Iraq at the moment is extremely mysterious. I go to Iraq and I can't crack this story at the moment. Some of my colleagues are still trying to, but can't do it. It's not as simple as it looks. I don't believe we've got all these raving lunatics wandering around blowing up mosques. There's much more to this than meets the eye. All of these death squads that move around are part of the security forces. In some cases they are Shiite security forces or clearly Sunni security forces. When the Iraqi army go

into Sunni cities they are Shiite soldiers going in. We are not making this clear. Iraqi troops, we've got an extra battalion. The Iraqi army is building up. The Iraqi army is split apart. Somebody is operating these people. I don't know who they are. It's not as simple as we're making it out to be. What is this thing when Bush says we have to choose between chaos and unity? Who wants to choose chaos? Is it really the case that all of these Iraqis that fought together for eight years against the Iranians, Shiites and Sunnies together in the long massive murderous Somme-like war between the Iranians and Iraqis - suddenly all want to kill each other? Why because that's something wrong with Iraqis? I don't think so. They are intelligent, educated people. Something is going seriously wrong in Baghdad.

TONY JONES: Can we look at one thing that might possibly be wrong, the Sunnis feel like they are being left out of the political equation. The Shias could end up running the majority of the government because they are indeed in the majority in a democracy.

ROBERT FISK: They do run the Government now. The Shiites do run the Government.

TONY JONES: Indeed. Couldn't that precisely be one of the reasons for the violence?

ROBERT FISK: Because the Sunnis don't have power anymore? But we've been saying this if the start. Don't you remember that after 2003 the Anglo-American invasion, the resistance started against the Americans and we were told they were Saddam remnants, 'dead-enders', that was the phrase used. Not anymore, because there are 40,000 insurgents, but that was the phase used at the time. They were Sunnis. They didn't like the fact they didn't have power. Then we captured Saddam and Paul Bremer, the number two pro-Consule in Baghdad, says, "Oh, we've got him," and everything was going to be OK. And then the insurgency got worse still. The reason was because people who wanted to join the insurgency feared that if they beat him out he might come back. Well, the moment Saddam was captured, they knew they could join the insurgency and Saddam wouldn't come back. I mean, there is something wrong in the narrative sequence that we've been given. You know, the idea that the Sunni community is suddenly sacrificing themselves en mass, strapping explosive belts to themselves and blowing themselves up all over Iraq because they don't have power anymore is a very odd reflection. I think what is going on among the Sunni community is much simpler. The Sunnis are not fighting the Americans because they don't have power and they're not fighting the Americans just to get them out - and they will get them out eventually. They are fighting the Americans so that they will say, "We have a right to power because we fought the occupying forces and you, the Shiites, did not," which is why it's very important to discover now that Moqtada al-Sadr, who has an ever-increasing power base among the Shiite community, is himself threatening to fight the British and Americans. Now, if the Shiites and Sunnies come together, as they did in the 1920s in the insurgency against the British, then we are finished in Iraq. And that will mean that Iraq actually will be united.

TONY JONES: But, Robert Fisk, what's is happening now, by all accounts and, indeed, the accounts of these *Washington Post* reporters who've been into the morgue and report hundreds of bodies of Sunnies who evidently have been garroted or suffocated or shot, are all saying that Moqtada al-Sadr's thugs have actually taken these people away and murdered them. That was in revenge for the Golden Shrine bombing.

ROBERT FISK: Yeah, look, in August, I went into the same mortuary and found out that 1,000 people had died in one month in July. And most of those people who had died were split 50/50 between the Sunnies and the Shiites, but most of them, including women who'd been blindfolded and hands tied behind their backs - I saw the corpses - were both Sunnies and Shiites. Now, I'm not complaining that the *Washington Post* got it wrong - I'm sure there are massacres going on by Shiites - but I think they are going on by militias on both sides. What I'd like to know is who is running the Interior Ministry? Who is paying the Interior Ministry? Who is paying the gunmen who work for the Interior Ministry? I go into the Interior Ministry in Baghdad and I see lots and lots of armed men wearing black leather. Who is paying these guys? Well, we are, of course. The money isn't falling out of the sky. It's coming from the occupation powers and Iraqi's Government, which we effectively run because, as we know, they can't even create a constitution without the American and British ambassadors being present. We need to look at this story in a different light. That narrative that we're getting - that there are death squads and that the Iraqis are all going to kill each other, the idea that the whole society is going to commit mass suicide - is not possible, it's not logical. There is something else going on in Iraq. Don't ask me to...

TONY JONES: Alright. But...

ROBERT FISK: Yeah, go on.

TONY JONES: No, it does seem to be impossible to explain, but, of course, this is exactly what people were saying in Bosnia before that war started up - that people were too intermarried, that you couldn't separate the community.

ROBERT FISK: Iraqi is not Bosnia. Iraqi is not Bosnia. Iraqi is not Bosnia. Iraqi is not Bosnia. We discovered here in Lebanon - and this city I'm talking to you from - that, during the civil war, which lasted from 1975 to 1990 and killed 150,000 people, that there were many outside powers involved in promoting death squads and militias here, and paying militias, not just Arab powers, but European powers were involved in stirring the pot in Lebanon. I think we're being very naive. Just because I can't give you the detail, like, of who ordered this death squad, doesn't prevent us saying that something is wrong with the narrative we're being given the press, from the West, from the Americans, from the Iraqi Government. There is something going wrong. Iraqis are not suicidal people. They don't go

around blowing up mosques every day. It's not a natural thing for them to do. It's never happened before. I can't say to you, "Well, ok, here is the person who killed this person, or here's the person who left this explosive truck." All I am saying to you is that it is time we said, "Hang on a minute, this is not how it looks."

TONY JONES: What if you put Iran into this equation, because, as we all know, Iran is under tremendous pressure from the West and particularly from the United States at the moment. It has links to these Shia militias and, possibly, links too, to these people you are talking about in the Interior Ministry.

ROBERT FISK: No, no, no, that's wrong. The Iranians link is with the Iraqi Government. The main parties in the government of Iraq which have been elected, who are there now dealing with the Americans, these are the representatives of Iran. Moqtada al-Sadr is irrelevant to Iran. Iranians are already effectively controlling Iraq because the two major power blocks, the two major parties who were elected and who Bush has just been talking to, these are effectively the representatives of Tehran. That's the point. Iran doesn't need to get involved in violence in Iraq.

TONY JONES: Unless the pressure from the United States ratchets up on Iran to the point where there are military threats against these nuclear facilities. Could it not therefore create havoc in Iraq?

ROBERT FISK: Well, you could say the same about Syria, too, couldn't you? And, of course the Americans are also accusing Syria of supporting the insurgents or letting them cross the border. But I think it it's much more complicated than that. For example, my sources in this area, who are pretty good, tell me that the Americans have already talked to the Syrians and are trying to do a deal with them to try and get the Syrians to help them over the insurgency and the price of Syria's help, I'm told, is that the Americans will ease off on the UN committee of inquiry into the murder of ex-prime minister Rafiq Hariri, here in Beirut, only a few hundred metres from here, on the 14th February last year. You know, if the Americans are going to get out of Iraq - and they must get out, they will - they need the help of Iran and Syria. And I think you'll find that certain elements within the State Department are already trying to work on that. Now, we hear the rhetoric coming from Bush. I mean, he's got an absolute black-hole chaos in Iraq, he's got Afghanistan - not an inspiration to the world, it's been taken over effectively by narco warlords, many who work for Karzai, the man who's just been making jokes about the Afghan welcome for Bush - and Bush wants another conflict with Iran? I don't think the Americans are in any footing or any ability, military or otherwise, to have another war or to have another crisis in that region. They're in the deepest hole politically, militarily and economically in Iraq. The fact that the White House and the Pentagon and the State Department seem to be in a state of denial doesn't change that. We had Condoleezza Rice here - literally in that building behind me - a few days ago saying that there are great changes taking place in the Middle East - optimistically. Well,

sure, there is a mosque war going on in Iraq with the Americans up to their feet in the sand, there's an Iranian crisis, or so we're told, the Saudis are frightened the Iraq war will spill over into Saudi Arabia, the Egyptians don't know how to reconcile Syria and Lebanon, there are increasing sectarian tensions here in Lebanon. You would think that someone is building what used to be called Potemkin villages, you know, these extraordinary things that Catherine the Great's court favourites use to build, facades of villages, so that everything looked nice in Russia even though things were barbarous behind the facades. I mean, this is a barbarous world we're living in now in the Middle East. It's never been so dangerous here, either for journalists or soldiers but most of all for Arabs. Hence the thousands of people in the mortuary.

TONY JONES: Robert Fisk, I am afraid we are out of time. We'll have to leave it there and the rest of the discussion on Iran, I suspect, we'll have to have when you're in Australia in the near future. Good luck in Beirut.

ROBERT FISK: (Laughs) Good place to have it! You're welcome.

- **Phoenix and the Salvador Option - Non-transparent CIA 'precedents' in Iraq's torrent of bloodshed (16 Sept 2005)**

Imad Khadduri, Friday, September 16, 2005

Phoenix and the Salvador Option - Non-transparent CIA 'precedents' in Iraq's torrent of bloodshed

"Developed by the Central Intelligence Agency in 1967, the Phoenix Program is considered the single-greatest American human-rights aberration of the Vietnam War.
Its purpose was to "neutralize" the Vietcong infrastructure. (emphasis added)
As Valentine underlines, due process was completely non-existent under the Phoenix Program and suspects, real or imagined, could be murdered, blackmailed, tortured or detained at will. At one point the program imposed monthly ""neutralization" quotas that led to further abuses in the field. The number of victims was never established but is estimated at between 40,000 and 60,000, of which many were innocent.
While recruitment for the Phoenix Program spread across all the branches of the US government, not all those approached accepted to serve. One Air Force officer who refused as a matter of conscience was Jacques Klein, who later rose to the rank of general and became one of the most respected UN troubleshooters in conflict areas. French-born, Klein reportedly commented that he would not join Phoenix because the means and methods used were "similar to those used by the Nazis in World War

II".

Refugees awaken ghosts of Vietnam September 14, 2005

Thememoryhole.org describes the Phoenix Program in Vietnam as follows: "Created by the CIA in Saigon in 1967, Phoenix was a program aimed at 'neutralizing' - through assassination, kidnapping, and systematic torture - the civilian infrastructure that supported the Viet Cong insurgency in South Vietnam. It was a terrifying 'final solution' that violated the Geneva Conventions and traditional American ideas of human morality."

"The following article examines evidence that the **'Salvador Option'** for Iraq has been ongoing for some time and attempts to say what such an option will mean.
It pays particular attention to the role of the Special Police Commandos, considering both the background of their US liaisons and their deployment in Iraq.
The article also looks at the evidence for death-squad style massacres in Iraq and draws attention to the almost complete absence of investigation. As such, the article represents an initial effort to compile and examine some of these mass killings and is intended to spur others into further looking at the evidence.
Finally, the article turns away from the notion that sectarianism is a sufficient explanation for the violence in Iraq, locating it structurally at the hands of the state as part of the ongoing economic subjugation of Iraq."
For Iraq, "The Salvador Option" Becomes Reality June 2, 2005

The above subject matter was dealt with previously on this site:
CIA terrorism in Iraq ... Who? US? June 1, 2005



- **Revealed: grim world of new Iraqi torture camps (03 July 2005)**

Secret torture chambers, the brutal interrogation of prisoners, murders by paramilitaries with links to powerful ministries... Foreign affairs editor Peter Beaumont in Baghdad uncovers a grim trail of abuse carried out by forces loyal to the new Iraqi government

- Peter Beaumont in Baghdad
- The Observer,
- Sunday July 3 2005
- Article history

This article appeared in the Observer on Sunday July 03 2005 . It was last updated at 02:22 on July 03 2005.

The video camera pans across Hassan an-Ni'ami's body as it is washed in the mosque for burial. In life he was a slender, good-looking man, usually dressed in a dark robe and white turban, Imam at a mosque in Baghdad's Adhimiya district and a senior official of the Muslim Clerics Association.

When I first interviewed him a year ago he was suspected of contacts with the insurgency. Certainly he supported resistance to US forces.

More recently, an-Ni'ami had dropped out of sight. Then, a little over a month ago, relatives say, paramilitary police commandos from 'Rapid Intrusion' found him at a family home in the Sha'ab neighbourhood of northern Baghdad. His capture was reported on television as that of a senior 'terrorist commander'. Twelve hours later his body turned up in the morgue.

What happened to him in his 24 hours in captivity was written across his body in chapters of pain, recorded by the camera. There are police-issue handcuffs still attached to one wrist, from which he was hanged long enough to cause his hands and wrists to swell. There are burn marks on his chest, as if someone has placed something very hot near his right nipple and moved it around.

A little lower are a series of horizontal welts, wrapping around his body and breaking the skin as they turn around his chest, as if he had been beaten with something flexible, perhaps a cable. There are other injuries: a broken nose and smaller wounds that look like cigarette burns.

An arm appears to have been broken and one of the higher vertebrae is pushed inwards. There is a cluster of small, neat circular wounds on both sides of his left knee. At some stage an-Ni'ami seems to have been efficiently knee-capped. It was not done with a gun - the exit wounds are identical in size to the entry wounds, which would not happen with a bullet. Instead it appears to have been done with something like a drill.

What actually killed him however were the bullets fired into his chest at close range, probably by someone standing over him as he lay on the ground. The last two hit him in the head.

The gruesome detail is important. Hanging by the arms in cuffs, scorching of the body with something like an iron and knee-capping are claimed to be increasingly prevalent in the new Iraq. Now evidence is emerging that appears to substantiate those claims. Not only Iraqis make the allegations. International officials describe the methods in disgusted but hushed tones, laying them at the door of the increasingly unaccountable forces attached to Iraq's Ministry of the Interior.

The only question that remains is the level of the co-ordination of the abuse: whether Iraq is stumbling towards a policy of institutionalised torture or whether these are incidents carried out by rogue elements.

Six months ago, Human Rights Watch (HRW) laid out a catalogue of alleged abuses being applied to those suspected of terrorism in Iraq and called for an independent complaints body in Iraq.

But as the insurgency has grown hotter, so too, it appears, have been the methods employed in the dirty counter-insurgency war.



To add to HRW's allegations of beatings, electric shocks, arbitrary arrest, forced confessions and detention without trial, The Observer can add its own charges These include the most brutal kinds of torture, with methods resurrected from the time of Saddam; of increasingly widespread extra-judicial executions; and of the existence of a 'ghost' network of detention facilities - in parallel with those officially acknowledged - that exist beyond all accountability to international human rights monitors, NGOs and even human rights officials of the new Iraqi government.

What is most shocking is that it is done under the noses of US and UK officials, some of whom admit that they are aware of the abuses being perpetrated by units who are diverting international funding to their dirty war.

Hassan an-Ni'ami may well have been a terrorist. Or he may have had knowledge of that terrorism. Or he may have been someone who objected too loudly to foreign troops being in Iraq. We will never know. He had no opportunity to defend himself, no lawyer, no trial. His interrogation and killing were a breach of international law.

And it is not only the case of an-Ni'ami but others too, all arrested by units of the Ministry of the Interior, many of whom were tortured and subsequently killed. Post-mortem images show a dozen or so farmers from the insurgent hotbed of Medayeen who were apparently seized by police as they slept in one of Baghdad's markets and whose bodies were discovered on a rubbish dump in shallow graves to the north of the city. Like an-Ni'ami, their bodies also bore the marks of extensive torture before execution, most with a bullet to the head.

The face of the first body is blackened by strangulation or asphyxiation. Another has bruises to his forehead where he was been hit repeatedly with something heavy. Yet another, his hands still tied with cord, has been punched in the eye and had his ankle fractured. Yet another shows signs of burning similar to an-Ni'ami's. The last two have identical puncture wounds, fist-width apart, suggesting the use of a spiked knuckle-duster.

Then there is Tahar Mohammed Suleiman al-Mashhadani, seized from the Abu Ghraib neighbourhood from early prayers outside a mosque with a number of other men, again by paramilitary police from Rapid Intrusion. When his body was found by family members in the morgue - 20 days after his arrest - he had been tortured almost beyond recognition.

These are not isolated cases. For what is extraordinary is the sense of impunity with which the torture, intimidation and murder is taking place. It is not just in Baghdad. In the majority Shia south, far from the worst ravages of the insurgency, there are also emerging reports consistent with the abuses in the capital.

If there is a centre to this horror, it is Baghdad's Ministry of the Interior, and the police commando units that operate from there.

The ministry is a strange, top-heavy building, set apart in an area of open ground off the highway. Its entrance is guarded by concrete blast-walls and endless checkpoints on the dusty road that leads to its crowded reception.

I came here almost exactly a year ago, two days after sovereignty had been handed back to Iraq's interim government. The floors were occupied by civil servants and blue-uniformed officers of the Iraqi Police Service. It was easy to wander in.

These days the ministry is a very different place. The dusty hinterland that leads to it is busy with the new paramilitary forces that most often have been accused of human rights abuses - the Rapid Intrusion brigades, most notoriously the Wolf Brigade of 'Abu Walid'. There has been no investigation or official findings over the allegations.

It was here - 12 months ago - that there was the first intimation that something was going seriously wrong. On the second day of Iraq's new government, US military police were forced to raid the Guest House to 'rescue' dozens of alleged criminals, scooped up in a sweep of the city, who were being subjected to beatings and forced confessions of their crimes.

Back then officials were happy to justify the violence - and angry at the US intervention. Criminals and terrorists expected a good beating, one official said, proud of his 100 per cent confession rate.

Now it is impossible to reach those officials as they shelter on heavily guarded floors. There are no American MPs to come to the aid of those locked in the cells.

A year ago, the worst violence was meted out in the Guest House. Now officials say the abuse happens on the seventh floor, where those suspected of terrorist connections are brought.

One of those held at the ministry for 'terrorist interrogation' is 'Zaid'. It is not his real name. Since his release, the 25-year-old Sunni from the western suburbs of Baghdad lives in fear of being brought back.

A taxi driver, the college graduate stopped his car in March to buy food in a market. When a bomb exploded nearby, he went to look at the damage. Arrested at the scene by soldiers from the Iraqi National Guard, he says he was handed over to the Ministry of the Interior.

At first, said Zaid, he was put in a room, on the seventh floor, measuring 10ft by 12ft, with 60 others. He was crammed in so tightly he could not sit. In some respects Zaid was lucky. Early in his detention,

a Ministry of Justice official appeared and, furious at the conditions, demanded the men be moved. 'He said, "You can't have this many people in a room this size," so they moved us to somewhere with more air and fed us. He asked too whether there had been any beatings and some said yes.'

For his part, Zaid says he was hung by his arms, but not for so long that it caused any permanent damage. His ordeal was largely to be subjected to threats of violence as up to eight guards circled him during his interrogation. But Zaid claims he witnessed what happened to men brought from another detention facility, a barracks run by the Wolf Brigade, who were kept in the same area as Zaid until his parents paid a hefty bribe for his release.

'I saw men from Samarra [another insurgent stronghold] and from Medayeen. Some appeared to have wounds to their legs,' he recalled. 'There were others who could not use their spoon properly. They had to hold it between their palms and move their heads to the spoon.'

His month in the ministry terrified Zaid. If the police came again for him, he said, he would rather throw himself off a balcony than go back. Zaid is not the first detainee to accuse the police of taking bribes for the release of prisoners. It is a common charge, as are descriptions of prisoners being brought from other, less accountable, interrogation facilities where the worst of the violence is taking place.

What is most important about Zaid's testimony is that it makes clear a link exists between the Ministry of Interior and the torture being conducted out of sight at other centres. Iraqi and international officials named several of these centres, including al-Hadoud prison in the Kharkh district of Baghdad.

A second torture centre is said to be located in the basement of a clinic in the Shoula district, while the Wolf Brigade is accused of running its own interrogation centre - said to be one of the worst - at its Nissor Square headquarters. Other places where abusive interrogations have been alleged include al-Muthana airbase and the old National Security headquarters.

'Abu Ali', a 30-year-old Sunni scooped up in a mosque raid in central Baghdad, was taken to the latter for a week in mid-May where he says he was beaten on his feet, subjected to hanging by his arms and, when he angered his guards by refusing to confess, threatened with being sat on 'the bottle' - being anally penetrated.

It is not just in Baghdad. Credible reports exist of Arab prisoners in Kirkuk being moved to secret detention facilities in Kurdistan, while other centres are alleged in Samarra, in the Holy Cities and in Basra in the south.

'There are places we can get to and know about,' said one Iraqi official. 'But there are dozens of other places we know about where there is no access at all.'

'It is impossible to keep track of detentions, and what is happening to people when they are taken away,' complained one foreign official involved in trying to building Iraq's respect for human rights.

'On top of that we have a whole culture that is permitting torture. The impression is the judiciary are simply not interested in responding to the issue of human rights. It is depressing.'

But it is not simply the issue of keeping track of where detainees are being taken that is a problem. Accountability has also become more opaque since the formation of the Shia-dominated government of Ibrahim Jaffari with ministers and senior officials at the Ministry of the Interior refusing to meet concerned international organisations including Human Rights Watch.

'We have been trying to break through to someone responsible to express our concerns,' said another international official.

'But it is impossible to meet the people we really need to see. What is so worrying is that allegations concerning the use of drills and irons during torture just keep coming back. And we have seen precisely the same evidence of torture on bodies that have turned up after they have been arrested. There is a dirty counter-insurgency war, led on the anti-insurgency side by groups responsible to different leaders. People are not appearing in court. Instead, what is happening to them is totally arbitrary.'

There is a significance to all this that goes beyond the everyday horror of today's Iraq. In the absence of weapons of mass destruction, the human rights abuses of Saddam Hussein's regime became more important as a subsidiary case for war.

It has been a theme that has been constantly reiterated: it was horrific then, and it is better now. The second may still just be true. In many aspects there may be some improvement, but the trajectory of Iraq now on human rights is in danger of undermining that last plank of justification.

True, there is a question of scale of the abuses. What is also different from Saddam's era is that Iraq is now host to multinational troops, to huge UK and US missions, and is a substantial recipient of foreign aid, including British and EU funds.

British and US police and military officials act as advisers to Iraq's security forces. Foreign troops support Iraqi policing missions. What is extraordinary is that despite the increasingly widespread evidence of torture, governments have remained silent. It is all the more extraordinary on the British side, as embassy officials have been briefed by senior Iraqi officials over the allegations on a number of occasions and individual cases of abuse have been raised with British diplomats.



In Iraq's Ministry of Human Rights, close to the Communications Tower and the location of one of the secret interrogation centres, they were marking the international day for the victims of torture. As officials gathered for chocolate cake and cola under posters that read 'Non to torture', some senior officials are in no doubt that torture in their country is again getting worse.

The deputy minister, Aida Ussayran, is a life-long human rights activist who returned from exile in Britain to take up this post. She concedes that abuses by Iraq's security forces have been getting worse even as her ministry has been trying to re-educate the Iraqi police and army to respect detainee rights.

'As you know, for a long time Iraq was a mass grave for human rights,' she says. 'The challenge is that many people who committed these abuses are still there and there is a culture of abuse in the security forces and police - even the army - that needs to be addressed. I do not have a magic solution, but what I can do is to remind people that this kind of behaviour is what creates terrorists.'

There is a sense of frustration too in the Ministry of Human Rights, for even as the security forces rapidly increase in size, the ministry tasked with checking abuses has only 24 monitors to pursue cases, at a time when officials believe it needs hundreds to keep Iraq's police and army effectively in check.

If Ussayran is robust about her country's problems with human rights abuses, others are convinced that, far from being the acts of rogue units, the abuse is being committed at the behest of the ministry itself - or at least senior officials within it.

'There are people in the ministry who want to use these means,' said one. 'It is in their ideology. It is their strategy. They do not understand anything else. They believe that human rights and the Convention against Torture are stupid.'

- **US Knight Ridder Exposes Systematic Torture, Murder Iraqi Sunnis; Writer Pays With Life (29 June 2005)**

30th June 2005, 05:31 pm by Stan



Motto of the sniper: One shot, one kill. It worked with Yasser Salihee. A single, well-aimed shot to the head killed him.

US Knight Ridder Exposes Systematic Torture, Murder Iraqi Sunnis; Writer Pays With Life
Jun 29, 2005

By Muhammad Abu Nasr, Free Arab Voice; Edited For Publication By JUS

Months after the stories began to surface in uncensored press, now American Knight Ridder newspaper has reported that so-called Iraqi security forces have been torturing and killing Iraqi Sunnis.

A story by Tom Lasseter and Yasser Salihee written for Knight Ridder was published on Monday 27 June 2005 and reported that days after Iraq's new Shiâ -led [puppet] government was announced on April 28, the bodies of Sunni Muslim men began turning up at the capital's central morgue after the men had been detained by people wearing Iraqi police uniforms.

The American agency reported that Fayiq Baqr, the director and chief forensic investigator at the central Baghdad morgue, said that the corpses first caught his attention because the men appeared to have been killed in methodical fashion. Their hands had been tied or handcuffed behind their backs, their eyes were blindfolded and they appeared to have been tortured. In most cases the dead men looked as if they had been whipped with a cord, subjected to electric shocks, beaten with a blunt object and shot to death, often with single bullets to their heads.

The American news report said that marks on those bodies were similar to injuries found on prisoners that the so-called Iraqi ministry for human rights, prodded by families of victims, rescued from secret prisons run by the interior ministry according to family accounts and medical records.

Knight Ridder reported that American occupation authorities and collaborating Iraqi officials said that the so-called police murders are “not being investigated systematically”. The agency said, however, that in dozens of interviews with families and officials, and through a review of medical records a Knight Ridder reporter and two special correspondents found more than 30 examples of this type of killing in less than a week. They include 12 cases with specific dates, times, names, and witnesses who said they would be willing to come forward if asked to do so by the installed authorities.

The so-called œministry of the interior which oversees the Iraqi police, denied any involvement in the murders, Knight Ridder reported. But eyewitnesses said that many of the dead were apprehended by large groups of men driving white Toyota Land Cruisers with [puppet] police markings. Knight Ridder reported that “The men were wearing police commando uniforms and bulletproof vests, carrying expensive 9-millimeter Glock pistols and using sophisticated radios, the witnesses said.”

American occupation officials cover up the systematic murders claiming that the victims were killed by resistance fighters dressed as puppet police. American Steven Casteel, a senior US adviser to the so-called ministry of the interior and a former American Drug Enforcement Administration intelligence chief, admitted that the puppet forces at times abused detainees but denied reports of systematic sectarian abduction and murder by his charges. When Knight Ridder attempted to contact the â€œinterior ministerâ€ to get his comment on the reports, the agency was told that the â€œministerâ€ â€œcould not schedule an interview.

The so-called “ministry of human right”, though more accepting of the stories, was similarly evasive about the matter of placing blame for the murders.

Ra’d Sultan, an official in puppet “ministry of human rights”, whose job is to monitor the treatment of Iraqis in prisons and detention centers, said some ”interior ministry” employees have tortured Iraqis whom they suspected of supporting the Resistance.

For one thing, officials in the interior ministry's intelligence division deny having any detainees, at all, claiming that they only question inmates in Iraqi prisons. But one investigation by the so-called "human rights ministry" found 32 detainees and another found 67 in " interior ministry" intelligence facilities. "The majority of the detainees had been tortured," Knight Ridder quoted Sultan as saying.

Knight Ridder reported that "most of those who were tortured had their hands cuffed behind their backs, were blindfolded and had been beaten by cords or subjected to electrical shock, Sultan said." The American news agency noted that Fayiq Baqr, at the morgue, said the bodies that have been brought to him handcuffed and blindfolded had been similarly abused.

But when it came to assigning blame for the torture and murder, the human rights official was evasive. Knight Ridder quoted Sultan as saying, when battered corpses turn up outside "interior ministry" facilities, How can I prove it is the security forces who were guilty of the torture and murder?

While it is evident to forensic investigator Fayiq Baqr what is going on, he too fears to state bluntly what is going on. Knight Ridder reported that "asked who he thought was behind the upsurge in such executions, Baqr said, " It is a very delicate subject for society when you are blaming the [puppet] police officers. . . . It is not an easy issue.â€ But Baqr cites the clear evidence of what is going on: â€œWe hear that they are captured by the police and then the bodies are found killed . . . it's obviously increasing.

In fact the abductions, tortures and murders have been increasing at an overwhelming rate. Knight Ridder reported that Baqr said he had been unable to catalog the deaths because so many bodies have been brought through his morgue and because he doesn't have enough doctors.

Before March 2003, he said, the morgue handled 200 to 250 suspicious deaths a month, about 16 of which included firearm injuries. He said he now sees 700 to 800 suspicious deaths a month, with some 500 having firearm wounds.

Many Iraqis say the giveaway that the abductors are at least connected to the police is the preponderance of reports involving Land Cruisers, Glocks and other expensive equipment.

Knight Ridder reported that on May 5, for example, 14 Sunni farmers were picked up from an east Baghdad vegetable market. The farmers had driven to the capital from al-Mada'in, a town south of Baghdad where the month before the puppet regime had concocted a false story about Resistance fighters kidnapping and executing Shi'a, a story that later proved to be fabricated in an operation blamed on Iranian intelligence.

The bodies of the farmers were discovered in shallow graves the next day, Knight Ridder reported. They had been blindfolded and tortured, and their hands had been cuffed behind their backs.

In separate interviews this week, Knight Ridder reported, two men who were at the east Baghdad market at the time said they saw a large group of puppet police detain the farmers.

“A patrol of more than 10 police vehicles drove up and parked,” said Ali Karim, a fruit vendor. “ They were running through the street with their guns, saying that the farmers had a car bomb with them. They pushed them against the walls and asked them for their IDs.

Knight Ridder reported that another vendor, Ahmed Adil, gave a similar account in a separate interview.

“We were sitting,” Knight Ridder reported Adil as saying, and the [puppet] police cars pulled up and spread in different directions. A neighborhood guard asked the [puppet] police what they were doing - he said these are just farmers - and the police said don’t get involved, they have a car bomb with them.â€

A brigadier general in the so-called “interior ministry,’ who spoke to Knight Ridder on the condition of anonymity, said his brother was taken during a large raid on May 14 in his working-class Sunni neighborhood in western Baghdad. The brother’s body was found a day later, bearing signs of torture.

The general, who was not present when his brother was detained, said he canvassed the neighborhood and interviewed one family after the next.

The descriptions of the abductors were identical in every case, he said: They came in white police Toyota Land Cruisers, wore [puppet] police commando uniforms, flak vests and helmets. They also had Glocks.

Knight Ridder reported that the general said he had tried, through the “interior ministry,” to find out which commando unit was in that neighborhood when his brother disappeared. He also said colleagues have told him that his own life is now in danger.
A day before the general’s brother disappeared in west Baghdad, Anwar Jasim, a Sunni welder at the puppet so-called “Iraqi ministry of industry and minerals” went missing from his south Baghdad home.

Knight Ridder reported that Jasim’s family said he was taken by a large group of men dressed and equipped like puppet police commandos.

Another man taken in Jasim’s neighborhood, a local grocer who gave his name as Abu Ahmad, said he was taken to the same detention facility as Jasim. While he was there, he said, he and other men sat on the floor blindfolded and handcuffed. They listened to other prisoners screaming.

When the other prisoners were brought back into the room, Abu Ahmad said, they said they'd been pummeled with long wooden staffs.

â€œWhen we were in detention, they put blindfolds and handcuffs on us. On the second day, the soldiers were saying, "He's dead," said Abu Ahmad. "Later, we found out it was Anwar."

Knight Ridder reported that the abductors dropped Jasim's body at Baghdad's al-Yarmuk hospital the next day, hospital staffers said. According to hospital records, Jasim had a bullet wound in the back of his head and cuts and bruises on his abdomen, back and neck.

The man in charge of the al-Yarmuk morgue, who gave his name as Abu â€˜Amir, said he remembers the day the commandos brought Jasim's corpse.

"The commandos told me to keep the body outside of the refrigerator so that the dogs could eat it because he's a terrorist and he deserves it," Abu Amir said, according to the Knight Ridder Reporters.

The killings didn't stop in May, Knight Ridder noted.

Sa'di Khalif's body was also found at al-Yarmuk. The 52-year-old Sunni, along with his brother Muhammad, was taken from his home in western Baghdad on June 10. His abductors rode up in pickup trucks painted with Iraqi puppet police insignia, his family said. About 10 came into the house, while about twice as many fanned out in the street outside, forming a security perimeter. They had radios, uniforms, flak vests and helmets, family members said.

"The doctor told us he was choked and tortured before they shot him", said Ahmad Khalif, one of Saâ'diâ's brothers. He looked like he had been dragged by a car.

Muhammad Khalif, 47, also beaten and shot, still had on metal handcuffs at the al-Yarmuk morgue.

The Knight Ridder report concluded by noting that Yasser Salihee was a special correspondent who worked on the report. He was shot and killed last week in Baghdad in circumstances that remain unclear. Special correspondent Mohammed al Dulaimy also contributed to the report from Baghdad, Knight Ridder added.

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"Yasser Salihee, 30, was killed while driving alone in Baghdad on June 24, his day off. A single bullet pierced his windshield and struck him in the head. It appeared that a U.S. sniper shot him." - The Guardian, June 30, 2005.



Salihee's widow at his funeral

- **Bush's 'Death Squads' (11 Jan 2005)**

Refusing to admit personal misjudgments on Iraq, George W. Bush instead is pushing the United States toward becoming what might be called a permanent "counter-terrorist" state, which uses torture, cross-border death squads and even collective punishments to defeat perceived enemies in Iraq and around the world.

Since securing a second term, Bush has pressed ahead with this hard-line strategy, in part by removing dissidents inside his administration while retaining or promoting his protégés. Bush also has started prepping his younger brother Jeb as a possible successor in 2008, which could help extend George W.'s war policies while keeping any damaging secrets under the Bush family's control.

As a centerpiece of this tougher strategy to pacify Iraq, Bush is contemplating the adoption of the brutal practices that were used to suppress leftist peasant uprisings in Central America in the 1980s. The Pentagon is "intensively debating" a new policy for Iraq called the "Salvador option," Newsweek magazine reported on Jan. 9.

The strategy is named after the Reagan-Bush administration's "still-secret strategy" of supporting El Salvador's right-wing security forces, which operated clandestine "death squads" to eliminate both

leftist guerrillas and their civilian sympathizers, Newsweek reported. “Many U.S. conservatives consider the policy to have been a success – despite the deaths of innocent civilians,” Newsweek wrote.

Central America Veterans

The magazine also noted that a number of Bush administration officials were leading figures in the Central American operations of the 1980s, such as John Negroponte, who was then U.S. Ambassador to Honduras and is now U.S. Ambassador to Iraq.

Other current officials who played key roles in Central America include Elliott Abrams, who oversaw Central American policies at the State Department and who is now a Middle East adviser on Bush’s National Security Council staff, and Vice President Dick Cheney, who was a powerful defender of the Central American policies while a member of the House of Representatives.

The insurgencies in El Salvador and Guatemala were crushed through the slaughter of tens of thousands of civilians. In Guatemala, about 200,000 people perished, including what a truth commission later termed a genocide against Mayan Indians in the Guatemalan highlands. In El Salvador, about 70,000 died including massacres of whole villages, such as the slaughter carried out by a U.S.-trained battalion against hundreds of men, women and children in and around the town of El Mozote in 1981.

The Reagan-Bush strategy also had a domestic component, the so-called “perception management” operation that employed sophisticated propaganda to manipulate the fears of the American people while hiding the ugly reality of the wars. The Reagan-Bush administration justified its actions in Central America by portraying the popular uprisings as an attempt by the Soviet Union to establish a beachhead in the Americas to threaten the U.S. southern border.

[For details about how these strategies worked and the role of George H.W. Bush, see Robert Parry’s *Secrecy & Privilege: Rise of the Bush Dynasty from Watergate to Iraq*.]

More Pain

By employing the “Salvador option” in Iraq, the U.S. military would crank up the pain, especially in Sunni Muslim areas where resistance to the U.S. occupation of Iraq has been strongest. In effect, Bush would assign other Iraqi ethnic groups the job of leading the “death squad” campaign against the Sunnis.

“One Pentagon proposal would send Special Forces teams to advise, support and possibly train Iraqi squads, most likely hand-picked Kurdish Perhmerga fighters and Shiite militiamen, to target Sunni

insurgents and their sympathizers, even across the border into Syria, according to military insiders familiar with discussions," Newsweek reported.

Newsweek quoted one military source as saying, "The Sunni population is paying no price for the support it is giving the terrorists. ... From their point of view, it is cost-free. We have to change that equation."

Citing the Central American experiences of many Bush administration officials, we wrote in November 2003 – more than a year ago – that many of these Reagan-Bush veterans were drawing lessons from the 1980s in trying to cope with the Iraqi insurgency. We pointed out, however, that the conditions were not parallel. [See Consortiumnews.com's "Iraq: Quicksand & Blood."]

In Central America, powerful oligarchies had long surrounded themselves with ruthless security forces and armies. So, when uprisings swept across the region in the early 1980s, the Reagan-Bush administration had ready-made – though unsavory – allies who could do the dirty work with financial and technological help from Washington.

Iraqi Dynamic

A different dynamic exists in Iraq, because the Bush administration chose to disband rather than co-opt the Iraqi army. That left U.S. forces with few reliable local allies and put the onus for carrying out counterinsurgency operations on American soldiers who were unfamiliar with the land, the culture and the language.

Those problems, in turn, contributed to a series of counterproductive tactics, including the heavy-handed round-ups of Iraqi suspects, the torturing of prisoners at Abu Ghraib, and the killing of innocent civilians by jittery U.S. troops fearful of suicide bombings.

The war in Iraq also has undermined U.S. standing elsewhere in the Middle East and around the world. Images of U.S. soldiers sexually abusing Iraqi prisoners, putting bags over the heads of captives and shooting a wounded insurgent have blackened America's image everywhere and made cooperation with the United States increasingly difficult even in countries long considered American allies.

Beyond the troubling images, more and more documents have surfaced indicating that the Bush administration had adopted limited forms of torture as routine policy, both in Iraq and the broader War on Terror. Last August, an FBI counterterrorism official criticized abusive practices at the prison at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba.

"On a couple of occasions, I entered interview rooms to find a detainee chained hand and foot in a fetal position to the floor, with no chair, food or water. Most times they had urinated or defecated on

themselves, and had been left there for 18-24 hours or more," the official wrote. "When I asked the M.P.'s what was going on, I was told that interrogators from the day prior had ordered this treatment, and the detainee was not to be moved. On another occasion ... the detainee was almost unconscious on the floor, with a pile of hair next to him. He had apparently been literally pulling his own hair out throughout the night."

Despite official insistence that torture is not U.S. policy, the blame for these medieval tactics continues to climb the chain of command toward the Oval Office. It appears to have been Bush's decision after the Sept. 11 attacks to "take the gloves off," a reaction understandable at the time but which now appears to have hurt, more than helped.

TV World

Many Americans have fantasized about how they would enjoy watching Osama bin Laden tortured to death for his admitted role in the Sept. 11 attacks. There is also a tough-guy fondness for torture as shown in action entertainment – like Fox Network's "24" – where torture is a common-sense shortcut to get results.

But the larger danger arises when the exceptional case becomes the routine, when it's no longer the clearly guilty al-Qaeda mass murderer, but it is now the distraught Iraqi father trying to avenge the death of his child killed by American bombs.

Rather than the dramatic scenes on TV, the reality is usually more like that desperate creature in Guantanamo lying in his own waste and pulling out his hair. The situation can get even worse when torture takes on the industrial quality of government policy, with subjects processed through the gulags or the concentration camps.

That also is why the United States and other civilized countries have long banned torture and prohibited the intentional killing of civilians. The goal of international law has been to set standards that couldn't be violated even in extreme situations or in the passions of the moment.

Yet, Bush – with his limited world experience – was easily sold on the notion of U.S. "exceptionalism" where America's innate goodness frees it from the legal constraints that apply to lesser countries.

Bush also came to believe in the wisdom of his "gut" judgments. After his widely praised ouster of Afghanistan's Taliban government in late 2001, Bush set his sights on invading Iraq. Like a hot gambler in Las Vegas doubling his bets, Bush's instincts were on a roll.

Now, however, as the Iraqi insurgency continues to grow and inflict more casualties on both U.S. troops and Iraqis who have thrown in their lot with the Americans, Bush finds himself facing a narrowing list of very tough choices.

Bush could acknowledge his mistakes and seek international help in extricating U.S. forces from Iraq. But Bush abhors admitting errors, even small ones. Plus, Bush's belligerent tone hasn't created much incentive for other countries to bail him out.

Instead Bush appears to be upping the ante by contemplating cross-border raids into countries neighboring Iraq. He also would be potentially expanding the war by having Iraqi Kurds and Shiites kill Sunnis, a prescription for civil war or genocide.

Pinochet Option

There's a personal risk, too, for Bush if he picks the "Salvador option." He could become an American version of Chilean dictator Augusto Pinochet or Guatemala's Efrain Rios Montt, leaders who turned loose their security forces to commit assassinations, "disappear" opponents and torture captives.

Like the policy that George W. Bush is now considering, Pinochet even sponsored his own international "death squad" – known as Operation Condor – that hunted down political opponents around the world. One of those attacks in September 1976 blew up a car carrying Chilean dissident Orlando Letelier as he drove through Washington D.C. with two American associates. Letelier and co-worker Ronni Moffitt were killed.

With the help of American friends in high places, the two former dictators have fended off prison until now. However, Pinochet and Rios Montt have become pariahs who are facing legal proceedings aimed at finally holding them accountable for their atrocities. [For more on George H.W. Bush's protection of Pinochet, see Parry's *Secrecy & Privilege*.]

One way for George W. Bush to avert that kind of trouble is to make sure his political allies remain in power even after his second term ends in January 2009. In his case, that might be achievable by promoting his brother Jeb for president in 2008, thus guaranteeing that any incriminating documents stay under wraps.

President George W. Bush's dispatching Florida Gov. Jeb Bush to inspect the tsunami damage in Asia started political speculation that one of the reasons was to burnish Jeb's international credentials in a setting where his personal empathy would be on display.

Though Jeb Bush has insisted that he won't run for president in 2008, the Bush family might find strong reason to encourage Jeb to change his mind, especially if the Iraq War is lingering and George W. has too many file cabinets filled with damaging secrets.

Robert Parry broke many of the Iran-Contra stories in the 1980s for the Associated Press and Newsweek. His new book, *Secrecy & Privilege: Rise of the Bush Dynasty from Watergate to Iraq*, can be ordered at secrecyandprivilege.com. It's also available at Amazon.com, as is his 1999 book, *Lost History: Contras, Cocaine, the Press & 'Project Truth.'*

- **Death-Squad Democracy (11 Jan 2005)**

Christopher Dickey
NEWSWEEK WEB EXCLUSIVE
Updated: 12:11 PM ET Oct 16, 2007

Having watched the slaughter in El Salvador first hand during the early 1980s, having lost many friends and acquaintances to the butchers there--among them nuns, priests and an archbishop who will someday be sainted--and having been targeted myself, I have something of a personal interest in this notion. I'm not about to forget the bodies lying unclaimed in the streets, the families of the victims too afraid to pick them up lest they become targets as well. When I hear talk of a Salvador Option, I can't help but think about El Playon, a wasteland of volcanic rock that was one of the killers' favorite dumping grounds. I've never forgotten the sick-sweet stench of carnal refuse there, the mutilated corpses half-devoured by mongrels and buzzards, the hollow eyes of a human skull peering up through the loose-piled rocks, the hair fallen away from the bone like a gruesome halo.

Still, I'm prepared to admit that building friendly democracies sometimes has to be a cold-blooded business in the shadowland of moral grays that is the real world. The Reagan administration was just doing--or, more often, allowing to be done--whatever it took to defeat a largely Communist insurgency. I'm even prepared to believe that Arena, the political party founded by the late death squad leader, Roberto D'Aubuisson, has long since cleaned up its act. Salvadoran voters returned Arena to power last year for the third time since 1992. Its presidential candidate, Tony Saca, beat former guerrilla leader Shafik Handal by a landslide. Would El Playon's voters have made a difference? Well, we'll never know.

The question of the moment is not the state of play in El Salvador, however, it's the disaster in Iraq. The Bush administration has a dismal record learning the wrong lessons from the wrong paradigms when it comes to Iraq. This was not the liberation of France, nor the occupation of Germany or Japan, and America's war on terrorists is not the same as Israel's war with the Palestinians. So, let's take a real close look at what we're talking about here when we discuss the Salvador Option.

For starters, what's been written about the NEWSWEEK report by Michael Hirsh and John Barry goes far beyond what the story says. It doesn't suggest for a minute, as the BBC reported, that the Pentagon is looking to create "paramilitary" death squads. It's about the possible training of elite units to snatch or kill very specific insurgent leaders.

In fact, the policy could be a formalization of what's already taking place. "We are, of course, already targeting enemy cadres for elimination whether by capture or death in various places including Afghanistan and Iraq," says Patrick Lang, former chief of Middle East analysis for the U.S. Defense Intelligence Agency. According to Lang, so many people in the Special Operations Forces have been caught up in efforts to do just that, there's actually a shortage of Green Berets to do what they're most needed for: training regular Iraqi troops. "Surely," says Lang, "no one except the Jihadis thinks that we should not be hunting enemy leaders and key personnel." But that's not the problem, quite. What those of us in El Salvador learned was that American policy might call for surgical action, but once the local troops are involved, they're as likely to use a chain-saw as a scalpel. And that, too, can serve American ends. In almost any counter-insurgency, the basic message the government or the occupiers tries to get across to the population is brutally simple: "We can protect you from the guerrillas, but the guerrillas can't protect you from us, and you've got to choose sides." Sometimes you can win the population's hearts and minds; sometimes you just have to make them more frightened of you than they are of the insurgents. "That was part of the thinking behind Fallujah," says a well-informed Coalition official, referring to the ferocious offensive that re-took the city in November. "We have only one of the tools so far. That is, 'You can't protect your people from us.' In Fallujah they had a little Salafi state. Well, that's gone now." The city remains in ruins; at least 50 American soldiers lost their lives, as well as hundreds, perhaps thousands of insurgents and civilians. It was a mighty tough lesson to teach. In terms of toe-to-toe urban combat, "that was the heaviest fighting the U.S. has been involved in since 1968," says the same official. Yet the Americans have not managed to protect the Iraqi citizenry from terror and intimidation by the guerrillas. "That's not something we're good at," says the official. His remarks were echoed by a senior U.S. embassy officer, who said the Americans just can't begin to out-intimidate the guerrillas. "It's a lesson we can't teach," says the embassy official. "We're not capable of that." Grabbing here and there for analogies, this guy started talking about what the late Syrian President Hafez Assad did to Sunni fundamentalists holed up in the city of Hama in 1982. Assad flattened a large section of the town. "Short of 'Hama rules,'" the official asked rhetorically, "what do you do?" In Iraq, in fact, as in many other places where the United States has tried to train ethical armies to fight dirty wars, the Iraqi troops are tacitly expected to do what

American troops won't. A fundamental purpose of the upcoming elections on January 30 is to create democratic legitimacy for whatever extreme measures the newly organized military decides to take. Because we're talking about the supposed Salvador Option, I figured I'd get back in touch with Joaquin Villalobos, El Salvador's most brilliant guerrilla leader. Now at Oxford, he favored the Iraq war in 2003, but is dumbfounded by the direction the conflict has taken. Villalobos was dryly analytical, as ever. "The problem of repression and its possible effectiveness corresponds to five basic elements: proportionality, the scope of the conflict, time, a context that favors a multiplier effect or not, and the ability to control what you're doing." If so, a helluva lot more fine tuning is needed than we're likely to see in Iraq any time soon. "If the generals think that with the hatred against the United States that exists in the region, with the divisions in Iraqi society, with Syria, Iran and others around, starting a dirty war is something that will give them an edge, they are totally and absolutely lost and desperate," says Villalobos. "Invading Iraq without a post-war plan created chaos, subsequent mistakes converted the chaos into organized resistance, and if they keep blundering ahead blindly, they'll convert the resistance into a real civil war." A U.S. official in Baghdad agrees. "We're bleeding from so many self-inflicted wounds," he told me the other day. The Salvador Option would be just one more.

URL: http://www.newsweek.com/id/47999

- **Israel and Death Squads for Iraq (10 Dec 2003)**

Israel trains U.S. assassination squads in Iraq *(09 Dec 2003)*

Israel helping train U.S. forces to combat Iraqi insurgents *(10 Dec 2003)*

West Bank of the Tigris *(10 Dec 2003)*

Army: No Israeli trainers at Bragg *(10 Dec 2003)*

US, Israel prepare mass killings in Iraq *(10 Dec 2003)*

Kurdish soldiers trained by Israelis *(19 Dec 2006)*

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Israel trains U.S. assassination squads in Iraq

by Julian Borger, *The Guardian*, December 9, 2003

Israeli advisers are helping train US special forces in aggressive counter-insurgency operations in Iraq, including the use of assassination squads against guerrilla leaders, US intelligence and military sources said yesterday.

The Israeli Defence Force (IDF) has sent urban warfare specialists to Fort Bragg in North Carolina, the home of US special forces, and according to two sources, Israeli military "consultants" have also visited Iraq.

US forces in Iraq's Sunni triangle have already begun to use tactics that echo Israeli operations in the occupied territories, sealing off centres of resistance with razor wire and razing buildings from where attacks have been launched against US troops.

But the secret war in Iraq is about to get much tougher, in the hope of suppressing the Ba'athist-led insurgency ahead of next November's presidential elections.

US special forces teams are already behind the lines inside Syria attempting to kill foreign jihadists before they cross the border, and a group focused on the "neutralisation" of guerrilla leaders is being set up, according to sources familiar with the operations.

"This is basically an assassination programme. That is what is being conceptualised here. This is a hunter-killer team," said a former senior US intelligence official, who added that he feared the new tactics and enhanced cooperation with Israel would only inflame a volatile situation in the Middle East.

"It is bonkers, insane. Here we are -- we're already being compared to Sharon in the Arab world, and we've just confirmed it by bringing in the Israelis and setting up assassination teams."

"They are being trained by Israelis in Fort Bragg," a well-informed intelligence source in Washington said.

"Some Israelis went to Iraq as well, not to do training, but for providing consultations."

The consultants' visit to Iraq was confirmed by another US source who was in contact with American officials there.

The Pentagon did not return calls seeking comment, but a military planner, Brigadier General Michael Vane, mentioned the cooperation with Israel in a letter to *Army* magazine in July about the Iraq counter-insurgency campaign.

"We recently travelled to Israel to glean lessons learned from their counterterrorist operations in urban areas," wrote General Vane, deputy chief of staff at the army's training and doctrine command.

An Israeli official said the IDF regularly shared its experience in the West Bank and Gaza with the US armed forces, but said he could not comment about cooperation in Iraq.

"When we do activities, the US military attaches in Tel Aviv are interested. I assume it's the same as the British. That's the way allies work. The special forces come to our people and say, do debrief on an operation we have done," the official said.

"Does it affect Iraq? It's not in our interest or the American interest or in anyone's interest to go into that. It would just fit in with jihadist prejudices."

Colonel Ralph Peters, a former army intelligence officer and a critic of Pentagon policy in Iraq, said yesterday there was nothing wrong with learning lessons wherever possible.

"When we turn to anyone for insights, it doesn't mean we blindly accept it," Col Peters said. "But I think what you're seeing is a new realism. The American tendency is to try to win all the hearts and minds. In Iraq, there are just some hearts and minds you can't win. Within the bounds of human rights, if you do make an example of certain villages it gets the attention of the others, and attacks have gone down in the area."

The new counter-insurgency unit made up of elite troops being put together in the Pentagon is called Task Force 121, *New Yorker* magazine reported in yesterday's edition.

One of the planners behind the offensive is a highly controversial figure, whose role is likely to inflame Muslim opinion: Lieutenant General William "Jerry" Boykin.

In October, there were calls for his resignation after he told a church congregation in Oregon that the US was at war with Satan, who "wants to destroy us as a Christian army".

"He's been promoted a rank above his abilities," he said. "Some generals are pretty good on battlefield but are disastrous nearer the source of power."

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Israel helping train U.S. forces to combat Iraqi insurgents

by Ellis Shuman, *Israel Insider*, 10 December 2003

Israeli advisers are helping train U.S. special forces in aggressive counter-insurgency operations in Iraq, The Guardian reported yesterday. A former U.S. intelligence agent told the paper that the IDF sent urban warfare specialists to Fort Bragg in North Carolina to help set up "assassination teams" that would target guerilla leaders.

Officials at Fort Bragg, however, denied that Israeli advisers had come to the base to train special forces soldiers in counter-insurgency tactics including assassination, the Fayetteville (N.C.) Observer reported today. "This command is not conducting any combined U.S. or Israeli training at Fort Bragg," said Lt. Col. Hans Bush, a spokesman for U.S. Army Special Operations.

But according to American and Israeli military and intelligence officials, Israeli commandos and intelligence units have been working closely with their American counterparts at Fort Bragg and in Israel to help them prepare for operations in Iraq, the *New Yorker* and other media sources reported.

"The Americans now realize their forces are in Iraq for the long haul, and are reorganizing accordingly," a senior Israeli security source told Reuters. "Israel has been providing advice on how to shift from a reliance on heavy, armored occupation troops to mobile forces that are more effective in quelling urban resistance and cause less friction with the general populace," he said.

U.S. forces already have adopted IDF tactics

According to media reports, American forces in Iraq have already begun to use tactics that echo Israeli operations in the Palestinian territories, including the sealing off centers of resistance with razor wire and razing buildings from where attacks have been launched against U.S. troops.

Reuters reported that the American forces plan to adopt the IDF's tactic of a "swarm assault," such as was used by the Israeli army during its operations in Nablus in April 2002. The "swarm assault," according to Reuters, constituted the "unleashing" of "roving covert infantry squads whose movements were coordinated using air surveillance."

"The Americans are used to fighting either in force or with isolated commando teams, while the swarm tactic is a combination of both," an Israeli military source said, quoted by Reuters. "It is ideal for hitting terrorists concentrated in civilian populations."

U.S. officials noted the similarity of their tactics in Iraq with those employed by the IDF, but denied that they are modeled on them, Reuters reported.

Israelis go to Iraq, U.S. officers come to Israel

The Guardian reported that Israeli security officials went to Iraq to advise American troops there. "Some Israelis went to Iraq as well, not to do training, but for providing consultations," an American intelligence source told the newspaper.

Brigadier-General Michael Vane, deputy chief of staff at the U.S. Army's training and doctrine command, mentioned the cooperation with Israel in a letter to *Army* magazine in July. "We recently traveled to Israel to glean lessons learned from their counter-terrorist operations in urban areas," he wrote.

Yediot Aharonot reported that the American military officials were in Israel for a few days and visited the IDF command center, focusing on ways to deal with Iraqi insurgency.

"They were interested in things in which we have a lot of experience," a senior Israeli security official told Yediot Aharonot. "They learned about explosive charges, and how to neutralize them, ... intelligence gathering, the use of dogs to locate charges. They were completely unfamiliar with the use of dogs, and this greatly interested them," the official said.

According to Reuters, the U.S. special forces have so far been slow in adopting one IDF tactic -- having commandos dressed as civilians swoop in to capture or kill fugitive insurgents. "In consultations, the Americans have made it clear that they see the need for undercover work to flush out wanted terrorists. But they lack personnel qualified in Arabic and the basic cultural knowledge needed to blend in," an Israeli military source said.

The Guardian reported that Israeli "consultants" were helping train U.S. special forces in ways to "neutralize" guerrilla leaders. "This is basically an assassination program. That is what is being conceptualized here. This is a hunter-killer team," a former senior U.S. intelligence official told the newspaper.

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West Bank of the Tigris

The Baltimore Sun, 10 December 2003

AMERICAN TACTICS against insurgents in Iraq are coming to resemble Israel's in its conflict with the Palestinians, and it's not hard to see why.

For one thing, cordoning off villages and blowing up houses and seizing relatives of suspected fighters may simply be the most obvious policy for a big army occupying uncertain or hostile territory. But for another, it turns out that the U.S. Army has actually been coached by Israeli officers, according to several published reports.

Lt. Gen. Ricardo Sanchez, the U.S. commander in Iraq, says that attacks by insurgents are likely to escalate through the winter and spring. The Pentagon has apparently decided to borrow a page from the Israelis and send in more Special Forces troops, essentially to target and kill leaders of enemy cells. The hope is that elite assassination squads will do a better job ferreting out their foes, while minimizing civilian casualties, than an armored division can do, even if they don't win any hearts and minds. It seems reasonable, because it actually comes closer to police work than to warfare, and that's what is needed.

There are just two problems: Identification with Israel is fatal to the American cause in Iraq and throughout the Middle East. To the extent that Iraqis see Hamas as fighting for them, and to the extent that fedayeen and jihadist fighters in Iraq see bombing an American convoy as a blow on behalf of the Palestinians, the whole U.S. enterprise is lost.

Second, it's difficult to argue that Israeli policies in the West Bank and Gaza Strip have been paying off. The intifada continues. Peace seems remote at best. And world opinion has turned strongly against Israel.

Surely, Pentagon planners recognize the risks inherent in their new course. The clear implication is that they have lost faith in the previous occupation policies.

It is worth noting that another major shift is going on: Finally, belatedly, the State Department has started sending virtually all available Arabic speakers to Iraq. They no longer need to get political (meaning neoconservative) clearance. The aim is to get Americans into the country who might actually be able to get a sense of what is going on there.

Neither of these is a small change, or a midcourse correction. They wouldn't have happened if the first seven months of the U.S. occupation of Iraq had been anything close to a success. It's commendable that the Bush administration is pragmatic enough to try something new, though the prospect of stoking an intifada from one end of Iraq to the other is unsettling.

One course of action that looks as though it may be shaping up would be particularly disastrous: jamming a lid on Iraq sometime in the first half of 2004, so that the place appears to be subdued come Election Day in November. Short-term fixes like that have a way of leading to long-term and needlessly painful headaches. A migraine in Iraq would be no way to mark President Bush's second term.

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Army: No Israeli trainers at Bragg

by Kevin Maurer, *Fayetteville Observer*, 10 December 2003

U.S. Army Special Operations officials are denying a British newspaper report that Israeli advisers came to Fort Bragg to train special forces soldiers in counter-insurgency tactics including assassination.

The Guardian, a British newspaper, reported Tuesday that the Israeli Defense Force sent urban warfare specialists to Fort Bragg to train special forces soldiers to act as "hunter-killer" teams tasked with killing guerrilla leaders in Iraq and foreign fighters attempting to cross the Syrian border with Iraq.

The Guardian quoted two unnamed sources in its report. One confirmed that the Israeli advisers did the training at Fort Bragg.

"This command is not conducting any combined U.S. or Israeli training at Fort Bragg," Lt. Col. Hans Bush, a spokesman for U.S. Army Special Operations, said. The U.S. Army Special Operations Command is based at Fort Bragg.

It is unclear if the training occurred elsewhere. Calls to U.S. Special Operations Command, which oversees all U.S. special operations forces and U.S. Central Command, which is in charge of U.S. forces in Iraq, seeking comment about the reported training were not returned. Both commands are based at MacDill Air Force Base in Tampa, Fla.

Bush said working and training with foreign military soldiers "is a core task" of special operations units.

"Our training focuses on doctrinal approaches to special operations in general," he said.

International flavor

Soldiers from other nations often come to Fort Bragg to train at the John F. Kennedy Special Warfare Center and School.

U.S. Special Forces units are trained in guerrilla warfare, and one of their primary missions is "foreign internal defense."

Foreign internal defense is the development of skills, tactics and techniques to counter a guerrilla movement against a standing government, he said.

Bush said assassination is not part of that training.

Special Forces units are also trained to perform combat search and rescue missions, peacekeeping, humanitarian assistance and counter-drug operations.

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Kurdish soldiers trained by Israelis

BBC 19 Dec 2006

Newsnight has obtained the first pictures of Kurdish soldiers being trained by Israelis in Northern Iraq, as well as an interview with one of the former commandos who carried out the work.

When the former Israeli special forces soldiers were sent to Iraq in 2004 they were told they would be disowned if they were discovered.

Their role there was to train two groups of Kurdish troops.

One would act as a security force for the new Hawler International Airport (near Erbil) and the other, of more than 100 peshmerga or Kurdish fighters, would be trained for "special assignments", according to one of Newsnight's interviewees.

Contractors

An Israeli security consulting form called Interop acted as the main contractor for the Hawler airport project and set up two subsidiaries (Kudo and Colosium) to carry out work in Iraq.

Kudo and Colosium described themseleves as Swiss-registered companies.

It's a bit tense because you know where you are and you know who you are, and there's always a chance that you'll get revealed
An Israeli trainer

In addition to the training, Kudo provided quad bikes, communications equipment and security fencing.

One of the founders of Interop, and its Chairman until 2003, was Danny Yatom, a former Head of Mossad - the Israeli foreign intelligence service and now an MP.

He told Newsnight today: "I was not aware of what was done in 2004 and 2005 because I cut all contacts with the company when I entered the Israeli parliament in 2003."

During 2004-5, Interop and Kudo were run by Shlomi Michaels, a former head of Israel's counter-terrorist unit. Contacted by Newsnight, Mr Michaels declined to comment.

Special assignments

Newsnight was told by the Israeli interviewee involved in the training that senior Kurdish officials were aware of their nationality, but not the troops being trained.

The sensitivities for the Kurdish authorities are serious, since their political enemies have long accused them of being in cahoots with Israel.

The Kurdish authorities have previously denied allowing any Israelis into northern Iraq.

The Israeli trainer says: "You know, day by day it's a bit tense because you know where you are and you know who you are. And there's always a chance that you'll get revealed.

"My part of the contract was to train the Kurdish security people for a big airport project and for training, as well as the Peshmerga, and the actual soldiers, the army.

"We were training them in all kinds of anti-terror lessons, anti-terror, security airport, training them with long rifles, pistols; telling them, teaching them tactics like shooting behind doors, behind barricades, shooting from the left, shooting from the right, shooting from windows, how to shoot first, how to identify a terrorist in a crowd.

"That's clearly special assignments. That's only training that special units get for special assignments.

"We crossed the border from Turkey and one of the intelligence officers passed us by, through the border, without stamping our passports.

"So you reckon that if two guys from the intelligence service knew we were Israelis and they saw our passports as well, the leadership knew as well - I mean their bosses, that's natural."

"The second Israel"

Khaled Salih, a spokesman for the Kurdistan Regional Government, says: "These are not new allegations for us. Back in the sixties and seventies we were called 'the second Israel' in the region and we were supposed to be eliminated by Islamist nationalist and now Islamist groups.

"They look for internal enemies and we are the easiest to target. These kind of speculations have been around in the region for more than 30 years."

The Kurdistan region sits at a strategic crossroads. To the east is Iran, to the north-west Turkey. Both countries have significant Kurd minorities and are worried about a Kurdish state emerging in northern Iraq.

The authorities there have accepted that for now and that they must remain part of a federal Iraq.

As they develop their region, the Kurds have opened an international airport at Irbil (Hawler in Kurdish).

It now boasts dozens of international flights each week and it is at Hawler International that the Israelis began their work.

Strategic options

With Iran becoming Israel's principal enemy, there have been reports of Israelis using Kurdish areas of Iraq to increase its strategic options.

One constraint facing the Israelis, should they ever want to hit Iran, is distance. Most Israeli jets are short range and they have few in-flight tankers. Some studies have suggested that Israel could make refuelling stops at a modern airfield in Kurdistan.

If the Israelis ever planned to use Hawler airport as an emergency refuelling stop, it has now been compromised by Israeli press reports.

After finishing their training, Kurds sang their national anthem while marching behind one of the Israelis.

Israeli Government spokesman, Mark Regev, told Newsnight that the Investigations Division of the Israeli Ministry of Defence had passed the details of this case to the Israeli police to see if there had been any violation of export laws.

He added: "We have not authorised anyone to do any defence work in Iraq... If information is brought and there's clear evidence that people broke our law, of course I expect them to be prosecuted."

MARK URBAN'S REPORT WAS SHOWN ON NEWSNIGHT ON TUESDAY, 19 SEPTEMBER, 2006

Story from BBC NEWS:
http://news.bbc.co.uk/go/pr/fr/-/2/hi/programmes/newsnight/5363116.stm

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Turkey using drones in N. Iraq with help of Israeli crews **PDF** By: Yossi Melman on: 27.12.2007

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'Israelis' with Ahmed Chalabi are building the walls in Iraq/ Chalabi Speaks **PDF** By: Imad Khadduri + PATRICK COCKBURN on: 16.05.2007

Soldiers building wall separating Sunnis, Shiites **PDF** By Joseph Giordono, and Monte Morin, Stars and Stripes April 19, 2007

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Car Bomb Kills Five Marines **PDF** - The Mossad is all over Iraq, and has a bomb-making facility in Kirkuk.

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Mossad and U.S. forces in Iraq spy on Iran -

USAF Playing Cat And Mouse In Iranian Airspace By Richard Sale UPI Intelligence Correspondent 1-27-5

Israeli hands in Fallujah? 11/24/2004 - According to the Israeli press statistics, Israel has about 1,000 officers and soldiers scattered around the American units in Iraq.

Pentagon May Use Death Squads in Iraq

FBI Claims More Arab Prisoners Abused By Richard A. Serrano Times Staff Writer December 20, 2004

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U.S. employs Israeli tactics in Iraq Urban warfare methods adapted to fight insurgency

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Israel trains US assassination squads in Iraq Julian Borger in Washington Tuesday December 9, 2003

'Phoenix' arises in Iraq Will the counter-insurgency plan in Iraq repeat the mistakes of Vietnam? by Seymour Hersh New Yorker December 10, 2003 -

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TORTURE INTERCONNECTIONS - The U.S. and Israel

Israeli lessons for the US in Iraq By Khalid Amayreh in the West Bank Friday 07 May 2004

MOSSAD AGENTS INVOLVED IN IRAQ PRISON ABUSE author: Mauricio Dolce

- **Iraq: Quicksand & Blood (13 Nov 2003)**

George W. Bush and his top advisers learned little from the Vietnam debacle of the 1960s, since most avoided service in the war. But many top Bush aides played key roles in the repression of leftist peasant uprisings in Central America in the 1980s, a set of lessons the Bush administration is now trying to apply to the violent resistance in Iraq.

The key counterinsurgency lesson from Central America was that the U.S. government can defeat guerrilla movements if it is willing to back a local power structure, no matter how repulsive, and if Washington is ready to tolerate gross human rights abuses. In Central America in the 1980s, those tactics included genocide against hundreds of Mayan villages in Guatemala's highlands and the torture, rape and murder of thousands of young political activists throughout the region. [More on this below]

The body dumps that have been unearthed across Central America are thus little different from the mass graves blamed on Saddam Hussein in Iraq, except in Central America they represented the dark side of U.S. foreign policy and received far less U.S. press scrutiny. Another lesson learned from the 1980s was the importance of shielding the American people from the ugly realities of a U.S.-backed "dirty war" by using P.R. techniques, which became known inside the Reagan administration as "perception management."

The temptation to recycle these counterinsurgency strategies from Central America to Iraq is explained by the number of Reagan-era officials now back in prominent roles in George W. Bush's administration.

They include Elliot Abrams, who served as assistant secretary of state for Latin America in the 1980s and is a National Security Council adviser to Bush on the Middle East; John Negroponte, U.S. ambassador to Honduras in the 1980s and now Bush's U.N. Ambassador; Paul Bremer a counter-terrorism specialist in the 1980s and Iraq's civilian administrator today; Bush's Secretary of State Colin Powell, who was the senior military adviser to Defense Secretary Caspar Weinberger in the 1980s; and Vice President Dick Cheney, who was a Republican foreign-policy stalwart in Congress two decades ago.

Proxy Army

One important difference between Iraq and Central America, however, is that to date, the Bush administration has had trouble finding, arming and unleashing an Iraqi proxy force that compares to the paramilitary killers who butchered suspected leftists in Central America. In El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras, well-established "security forces" already existed. Plus, in Nicaragua,

Ronald Reagan could turn to the remnants of ousted dictator Anastasio Somoza's National Guard to fashion a contra rebel force.

In Iraq, however, U.S. policymakers chose to disband – rather than redirect – Saddam Hussein's army and intelligence services, leaving the burden of counterinsurgency heavily on U.S. occupying troops who are unfamiliar with Iraq's language, history and terrain.

Now, with U.S. casualties mounting, the Bush administration is scrambling to build an Iraqi paramilitary force to serve under the U.S.-appointed Iraqi Governing Council's interior minister. The core of this force would be drawn from the security and intelligence wings of five political organizations, including Ahmad Chalabi's formerly exile-based Iraqi National Congress.

Bush's national security adviser Condoleezza Rice said on Nov. 10 that the administration's No. 1 strategy in Iraq is to build an Iraqi security force, which she claims already numbers about 118,000 people, roughly the size of the U.S. military contingent in Iraq. Many of these Iraqis have received speeded-up training with the goal of using them to pacify the so-called Sunni Triangle north of Baghdad.

Earlier, some U.S. officials, including civilian administrator Bremer, balked at a paramilitary force out of fear it would become a tool of repression. "The unit that the Governing Council wants to create would be the most powerful domestic security force in Iraq, fueling concern among some U.S. officials that it could be used for undemocratic purposes, such as stifling political dissent, as such forces do in other Arab nations," the Washington Post wrote.

But faced with the rising U.S. death toll, Bremer no longer has "any objection in principle" to this concept, a senior U.S. official told the Post. [Washington Post, Nov. 5, 2003] With all the missteps that have plagued the U.S. occupation, Bremer appears to understand that the Iraqi security situation needs to be bolstered – and quickly.

In much of the Sunni Triangle, U.S. control now is intermittent at best, existing only during heavily armed U.S. forays into resistance strongholds. "American troops patrol less frequently, townspeople openly threaten Iraqi security personnel who cooperate with U.S. forces, and the night belongs to the guerrillas," the Washington Post reported from Thuluiya about 60 miles north of Baghdad. [Nov. 8, 2003]

One U.S. senator who has visited the region told me that the struggle for Iraq may take 30 years before a new generation accepts the American presence. But even taking the long view does not guarantee success. Israel has been battling to break the back of Palestinian resistance for more than three decades with no sign that younger Palestinians are less hostile to the Israeli occupation. The Iraqi

insurgency already has spread too far and penetrated too deeply to be easily uprooted, military experts say.

Central American Lessons

Having lurched into this Iraqi quicksand, the Bush administration is now searching for lessons that can be gleaned from the most recent U.S. counterinsurgency experience, the region-wide wars in Central America that began as uprisings against ruling oligarchies and their military henchmen but came to be viewed by the Reagan administration as an all-too-close front in the Cold War.

Though U.S.-backed armies and paramilitary forces eventually quelled the leftist peasant rebellions, the cost in blood was staggering. The death toll in El Salvador was estimated at about 70,000 people. In Guatemala, the number of dead reached about 200,000, including what a truth commission concluded was a genocide against the Mayan populations in Guatemala's highlands.

The muted press coverage that the U.S. news media has given these atrocities as they have come to light over the years also showed the residual strength of the "perception management" employed by the Reagan administration. For instance, even when the atrocities of former Guatemalan dictator Efrain Rios Montt are mentioned, as they were in the context of his defeat in Guatemala's Nov. 9 presidential elections, the history of Reagan's warm support for Rios Montt is rarely, if ever, noted by the U.S. press.

While the slaughter of the Mayans was underway in the 1980s, Reagan portrayed Gen. Rios Montt and the Guatemalan army as victims of disinformation spread by human rights groups and journalists. Reagan huffily discounted reports that Rios Montt's army was eradicating hundreds of Mayan villages.

On Dec. 4, 1982, after meeting with Rios Montt, Reagan hailed the general as "totally dedicated to democracy" and declared that Rios Montt's government had been "getting a bum rap." Reagan also reversed President Jimmy Carter's policy of embargoing military equipment to Guatemala over its human rights abuses. Carter's human rights embargoes represented one of the few times during the Cold War when Washington objected to the repression that pervaded Central American society.

Death Squad Origins

Though many U.S.-backed regimes in Latin America practiced the dark arts of "disappearances" and "death squads," the history of Guatemala's security operations is perhaps the best documented because the Clinton administration declassified scores of the secret U.S. documents in the late 1990s to assist a Guatemalan truth commission. The Guatemala experience also may be the most instructive today in illuminating a possible course of the counterinsurgency in Iraq.

The original Guatemalan death squads took shape in the mid-1960s under anti-terrorist training provided by a U.S. public safety adviser named John Longon, the declassified documents show. In January 1966, Longon reported to his superiors about both overt and covert components of his anti-terrorist strategies.

On the covert side, Longon pressed for “a safe house [to] be immediately set up” for coordination of security intelligence. “A room was immediately prepared in the [Presidential] Palace for this purpose and ... Guatemalans were immediately designated to put this operation into effect,” according to Longon’s report. Longon’s operation within the presidential compound became the starting point for the infamous “Archivos” intelligence unit that evolved into a clearinghouse for Guatemala’s most notorious political assassinations.

Just two months after Longon's report, a secret CIA cable noted the clandestine execution of several Guatemalan "communists and terrorists" on the night of March 6, 1966. By the end of the year, the Guatemalan government was bold enough to request U.S. help in establishing special kidnapping squads, according to a cable from the U.S. Southern Command that was forwarded to Washington on Dec. 3, 1966.

By 1967, the Guatemalan counterinsurgency terror had gained a fierce momentum. On Oct. 23, 1967, the State Department's Bureau of Intelligence and Research noted the "accumulating evidence that the [Guatemalan] counterinsurgency machine is out of control." The report noted that Guatemalan "counter-terror" units were carrying out abductions, bombings, torture and summary executions "of real and alleged communists."

The mounting death toll in Guatemala disturbed some American officials assigned to the country. The embassy's deputy chief of mission, Viron Vaky, expressed his concerns in a remarkably candid report that he submitted on March 29, 1968, after returning to Washington. Vaky framed his arguments in pragmatic terms, but his moral anguish broke through.

“The official squads are guilty of atrocities. Interrogations are brutal, torture is used and bodies are mutilated,” Vaky wrote. “In the minds of many in Latin America, and, tragically, especially in the sensitive, articulate youth, we are believed to have condoned these tactics, if not actually encouraged them. Therefore our image is being tarnished and the credibility of our claims to want a better and more just world are increasingly placed in doubt.”

Vaky also noted the deceptions within the U.S. government that resulted from its complicity in state-sponsored terror. “This leads to an aspect I personally find the most disturbing of all -- that we have not been honest with ourselves,” Vaky said. “We have condoned counter-terror; we may even in effect

have encouraged or blessed it. We have been so obsessed with the fear of insurgency that we have rationalized away our qualms and uneasiness.

“This is not only because we have concluded we cannot do anything about it, for we never really tried. Rather we suspected that maybe it is a good tactic, and that as long as Communists are being killed it is alright. Murder, torture and mutilation are alright if our side is doing it and the victims are Communists. After all hasn't man been a savage from the beginning of time so let us not be too queasy about terror. I have literally heard these arguments from our people.”

Though kept secret from the American public for three decades, the Vaky memo obliterated any claim that Washington simply didn't know the reality in Guatemala. Still, with Vaky's memo squirreled away in State Department files, the killing went on. The repression was noted almost routinely in reports from the field.

On Jan. 12, 1971, the Defense Intelligence Agency reported that Guatemalan forces had "quietly eliminated" hundreds of "terrorists and bandits" in the countryside. On Feb. 4, 1974, a State Department cable reported resumption of "death squad" activities.

On Dec. 17, 1974, a DIA biography of one U.S.-trained Guatemalan officer gave an insight into how U.S. counterinsurgency doctrine had imbued the Guatemalan strategies. According to the biography, Lt. Col. Elias Osmundo Ramirez Cervantes, chief of security section for Guatemala's president, had trained at the U.S. Army School of Intelligence at Fort Holabird in Maryland. Back in Guatemala, Ramirez Cervantes was put in charge of plotting raids on suspected subversives as well as their interrogations.

The Reagan Bloodbath

As brutal as the Guatemalan security forces were in the 1960s and 1970s, the worst was yet to come. In the 1980s, the Guatemalan army escalated its slaughter of political dissidents and their suspected supporters to unprecedented levels.

Ronald Reagan's election in November 1980 set off celebrations in the well-to-do communities of Central America. After four years of Jimmy Carter's human rights nagging, the region's hard-liners were thrilled that they had someone in the White House who understood their problems.

The oligarchs and the generals had good reason for optimism. For years, Reagan had been a staunch defender of right-wing regimes that engaged in bloody counterinsurgency against leftist enemies. In the late 1970s, when Carter's human rights coordinator, Pat Derian, criticized the Argentine military for its "dirty war" -- tens of thousands of "disappearances," tortures and murders -- then-political commentator Reagan joshed that she should “walk a mile in the moccasins” of the Argentine generals before criticizing them. [For details, see Martin Edwin Andersen's *Dossier Secreto*.]

After his election in 1980, Reagan pushed to overturn an arms embargo imposed on Guatemala by Carter. Yet as Reagan was moving to loosen up the military aid ban, the CIA and other U.S. intelligence agencies were confirming new Guatemalan government massacres.

In April 1981, a secret CIA cable described a massacre at Cocob, near Nebaj in the Ixil Indian territory. On April 17, 1981, government troops attacked the area believed to support leftist guerrillas, the cable said. According to a CIA source, "the social population appeared to fully support the guerrillas" and "the soldiers were forced to fire at anything that moved." The CIA cable added that "the Guatemalan authorities admitted that 'many civilians' were killed in Cocob, many of whom undoubtedly were non-combatants."

Despite the CIA account and other similar reports, Reagan permitted Guatemala's army to buy $3.2 million in military trucks and jeeps in June 1981. To permit the sale, Reagan removed the vehicles from a list of military equipment that was covered by the human rights embargo.

No Regrets

Apparently confident of Reagan’s sympathies, the Guatemalan government continued its political repression without apology.

According to a State Department cable on Oct. 5, 1981, Guatemalan leaders met with Reagan's roving ambassador, retired Gen. Vernon Walters, and left no doubt about their plans. Guatemala's military leader, Gen. Fernando Romeo Lucas Garcia, "made clear that his government will continue as before -- that the repression will continue."

Human rights groups saw the same picture. The Inter-American Human Rights Commission released a report on Oct. 15, 1981, blaming the Guatemalan government for "thousands of illegal executions." [Washington Post, Oct. 16, 1981]

But the Reagan administration was set on whitewashing the ugly scene. A State Department "white paper," released in December 1981, blamed the violence on leftist "extremist groups" and their "terrorist methods," inspired and supported by Cuba's Fidel Castro. Yet, even as these rationalizations were pitched to the American people, U.S. intelligence agencies in Guatemala continued to learn of government-sponsored massacres.

One CIA report in February 1982 described an army sweep through the so-called Ixil Triangle in central El Quiche province. "The commanding officers of the units involved have been instructed to destroy all towns and villages which are cooperating with the Guerrilla Army of the Poor [known as the EGP] and eliminate all sources of resistance," the report stated. "Since the operation began, several villages have been burned to the ground, and a large number of guerrillas and collaborators have been killed."

The CIA report explained the army's modus operandi: "When an army patrol meets resistance and takes fire from a town or village, it is assumed that the entire town is hostile and it is subsequently destroyed." When the army encountered an empty village, it was "assumed to have been supporting the EGP, and it is destroyed. There are hundreds, possibly thousands of refugees in the hills with no homes to return to. ... The well-documented belief by the army that the entire Ixil Indian population is pro-EGP has created a situation in which the army can be expected to give no quarter to combatants and non-combatants alike."

Rios Montt

In March 1982, Gen. Rios Montt seized power in a coup d'etat. An avowed fundamentalist Christian, he immediately impressed official Washington, where Reagan hailed Rios Montt as "a man of great personal integrity."

By July 1982, however, Rios Montt had begun a new scorched-earth campaign called his "rifles and beans" policy. The slogan meant that pacified Indians would get "beans," while all others could expect to be the target of army "rifles." In October, he secretly gave carte blanche to the feared "Archivos" intelligence unit to expand "death squad" operations.

The U.S. embassy was soon hearing more accounts of the army conducting Indian massacres. On Oct, 21, 1982, one cable described how three embassy officers tried to check out some of these reports but ran into bad weather and canceled the inspection. Still, the cable put a positive spin on the situation. Though unable to check out the massacre reports, the embassy officials did "reach the conclusion that the army is completely up front about allowing us to check alleged massacre sites and to speak with whomever we wish."

The next day, the embassy fired off an analysis that the Guatemalan government was the victim of a communist-inspired "disinformation campaign," a claim embraced by Reagan with his "bum rap" comment after he met with Rios Montt in December 1982.

On Jan. 7, 1983, Reagan lifted the ban on military aid to Guatemala and authorized the sale of $6 million in military hardware. Approval covered spare parts for UH-1H helicopters and A-37 aircraft used in counterinsurgency operations. State Department spokesman John Hughes said political violence in the cities had "declined dramatically" and that rural conditions had improved too.

In February 1983, however, a secret CIA cable noted a rise in "suspect right-wing violence" with kidnappings of students and teachers. Bodies of victims were appearing in ditches and gullies. CIA sources traced these political murders to Rios Montt's order to the "Archivos" in October to "apprehend, hold, interrogate and dispose of suspected guerrillas as they saw fit."

Sugarcoating

Despite these grisly facts on the ground, the annual State Department human rights survey sugarcoated the facts for the American public and praised the supposedly improved human rights situation in Guatemala. "The overall conduct of the armed forces had improved by late in the year" 1982, the report stated.

A different picture -- far closer to the secret information held by the U.S. government -- was coming from independent human rights investigators. On March 17, 1983, Americas Watch representatives condemned the Guatemalan army for human rights atrocities against the Indian population.

New York attorney Stephen L. Kass said these findings included proof that the government carried out "virtually indiscriminate murder of men, women and children of any farm regarded by the army as possibly supportive of guerrilla insurgents."

Rural women suspected of guerrilla sympathies were raped before execution, Kass said. Children were "thrown into burning homes. They are thrown in the air and speared with bayonets. We heard many, many stories of children being picked up by the ankles and swung against poles so their heads are destroyed." [AP, March 17, 1983]

Publicly, however, senior Reagan officials continued to put on a happy face. On June 12, 1983, special envoy Richard B. Stone praised "positive changes" in Rios Montt's government. But Rios Montt's vengeful Christian fundamentalism was hurtling out of control, even by Guatemalan standards. In August 1983, Gen. Oscar Mejia Victores seized power in another coup.

Despite the power shift, Guatemalan security forces continued to kill those who were deemed subversives or terrorists. When three Guatemalans working for the U.S. Agency for International Development were slain in November 1983, U.S. Ambassador Frederic Chapin suspected that "Archivos" hit squads were sending a message to the United States to back off even the mild pressure for human rights improvements.

In late November, in a brief show of displeasure, the administration postponed the sale of $2 million in helicopter spare parts. The next month, however, Reagan sent the spare parts. In 1984, Reagan succeeded, too, in pressuring Congress to approve $300,000 in military training for the Guatemalan army.

By mid-1984, Chapin, who had grown bitter about the army's stubborn brutality, was gone, replaced by a far-right political appointee named Alberto Piedra, who was all for increased military assistance to Guatemala.

In January 1985, Americas Watch issued a report observing that Reagan's State Department "is apparently more concerned with improving Guatemala's image than in improving its human rights."

Death Camp

Other examples of Guatemala's "death squad" strategy came to light later. For example, a U.S. Defense Intelligence Agency cable in 1994 reported that the Guatemalan military had used an air base in Retalhuleu during the mid-1980s as a center for coordinating the counterinsurgency campaign in southwest Guatemala – and for torturing and burying prisoners.

At the base, pits were filled with water to hold captured suspects. "Reportedly there were cages over the pits and the water level was such that the individuals held within them were forced to hold on to the bars in order to keep their heads above water and avoid drowning," the DIA report stated.

The Guatemalan military used the Pacific Ocean as another dumping spot for political victims, according to the DIA report. Bodies of insurgents tortured to death and live prisoners marked for "disappearance" were loaded onto planes that flew out over the ocean where the soldiers would shove the victims into the water to drown, a tactic that had been a favorite disposal technique of the Argentine military in the 1970s.

The history of the Retalhuleu death camp was uncovered by accident in the early 1990s when a Guatemalan officer wanted to let soldiers cultivate their own vegetables on a corner of the base. But the officer was taken aside and told to drop the request "because the locations he had wanted to cultivate were burial sites that had been used by the D-2 [military intelligence] during the mid-

eighties," the DIA report said. [To see the Guatemalan documents, go to the National Security Archive's Web site.]

Guatemala, of course, was not the only Central American country where Reagan and his administration supported brutal counterinsurgency operations -- and then sought to cover up the bloody facts. Deception of the American public – a strategy that the administration internally called "perception management" – was as much a part of the Central American story as the Bush administration's lies and distortions about weapons of mass destruction were to the lead-up to the war in Iraq.

Reagan's falsification of the historical record became a hallmark of the conflicts in El Salvador and Nicaragua as well as Guatemala. In one case, Reagan personally lashed out at a human rights investigator named Reed Brody, a New York lawyer who had collected affidavits from more than 100 witnesses to atrocities carried out by the U.S.-supported contras in Nicaragua.

Angered by the revelations about his contra "freedom-fighters," Reagan denounced Brody in a speech on April 15, 1985, calling him "one of dictator [Daniel] Ortega's supporters, a sympathizer who has openly embraced Sandinismo."

Privately, Reagan had a far more accurate understanding of the true nature of the contras. At one point in the contra war, Reagan turned to CIA official Duane Clarridge and demanded that the contras be used to destroy some Soviet-supplied helicopters that had arrived in Nicaragua. In his memoirs, Clarridge recalled that "President Reagan pulled me aside and asked, 'Dewey, can't you get those vandals of yours to do this job.'" [See Clarridge's *A Spy for All Seasons*.]

`Perception Management'

To manage U.S. perceptions of the wars in Central America, Reagan also authorized a systematic program of distorting information and intimidating American journalists. Called "public diplomacy," the project was run by a CIA propaganda veteran, Walter Raymond Jr., who was assigned to the National Security Council staff. The project's key operatives developed propaganda "themes," selected "hot buttons" to excite the American people, cultivated pliable journalists who would cooperate and bullied reporters who wouldn't go along.

The best-known attacks were directed against *New York Times* correspondent Raymond Bonner for disclosing Salvadoran army massacres of civilians, including the slaughter of some 800 men, women and children in El Mozote in December 1981. But Bonner was not alone. Reagan's operatives pressured scores of reporters and their editors in an ultimately successful campaign to minimize information about these human rights crimes reaching the American people. [For details, see Robert Parry's *Lost History*.]

The tamed reporters, in turn, gave the administration a far freer hand to pursue counterinsurgency operations in Central America. Despite the tens of thousands of civilian deaths and now-corroborated accounts of massacres and genocide, not a single senior military officer in Central America was held accountable for the bloodshed.

The U.S. officials who sponsored and encouraged these war crimes not only escaped legal judgment, but remain highly respected figures in Washington. Some have returned to senior government posts under George W. Bush. Meanwhile, Reagan has been honored as few recent presidents have with major public facilities named after him, including National Airport in Washington.

On Feb. 25, 1999, a Guatemalan truth commission issued a report on the staggering human rights crimes that Reagan and his administration had aided, abetted and concealed.

The Historical Clarification Commission, an independent human rights body, estimated that the Guatemalan conflict claimed the lives of some 200,000 people with the most savage bloodletting occurring in the 1980s. Based on a review of about 20 percent of the dead, the panel blamed the army for 93 percent of the killings and leftist guerrillas for three percent. Four percent were listed as unresolved.

The report documented that in the 1980s, the army committed 626 massacres against Mayan villages. "The massacres that eliminated entire Mayan villages ... are neither perfidious allegations nor figments of the imagination, but an authentic chapter in Guatemala's history," the commission concluded.

The army "completely exterminated Mayan communities, destroyed their livestock and crops," the report said. In the northern highlands, the report termed the slaughter a "genocide." Besides carrying out murder and "disappearances," the army routinely engaged in torture and rape. "The rape of women, during torture or before being murdered, was a common practice" by the military and paramilitary forces, the report found.

The report added that the "government of the United States, through various agencies including the CIA, provided direct and indirect support for some [of these] state operations." The report concluded that the U.S. government also gave money and training to a Guatemalan military that committed "acts of genocide" against the Mayans.

"Believing that the ends justified everything, the military and the state security forces blindly pursued the anticommunist struggle, without respect for any legal principles or the most elemental ethical and

religious values, and in this way, completely lost any semblance of human morals," said the commission chairman, Christian Tomuschat, a German jurist.

"Within the framework of the counterinsurgency operations carried out between 1981 and 1983, in certain regions of the country agents of the Guatemalan state committed acts of genocide against groups of the Mayan people," Tomuschat said. [For more details on the commission's report, see the Washington Post or New York Times, Feb. 26, 1999]

During a visit to Central America, on March 10, 1999, President Clinton apologized for the past U.S. support of right-wing regimes in Guatemala. "For the United States, it is important that I state clearly that support for military forces and intelligence units which engaged in violence and widespread repression was wrong, and the United States must not repeat that mistake," Clinton said.

Iraqi War

Less than five years later, however, the U.S. government is teetering on the edge of another brutal counterinsurgency war in Iraq.

Some supporters of Bush's invasion of Iraq in March are now advocating an iron fist to quell the growing Iraqi resistance. In a debate in Berkeley, Calif., for instance, ardent Bush supporter Christopher Hitchens declared that the U.S. intervention in Iraq needed to be "more thoroughgoing, more thought-out and more, if necessary, ruthless." [See Salon.com, Nov. 11, 2003]

Lt. Gen. Ricardo Sanchez, the U.S. commander in Iraq, told a news conference in Baghdad on Nov. 11 that U.S. forces would follow a new get-tough strategy against the Iraqi resistance. "We are taking the fight into the safe havens of the enemy, in the heartland of the country," Sanchez said.

But U.S. military commanders in Iraq and Bush enthusiasts at home are not alone in encouraging a fierce counterinsurgency campaign to throttle the Iraqi resistance. Though many war critics say the likelihood of a difficult occupation should have been anticipated before the invasion, some now agree that the U.S. government must fight and win in Iraq or the United States will suffer a crippling loss of credibility in the Middle East and throughout the world.

Wishing for a result, however, can be far different from achieving a result. Wanting the U.S. forces to prevail and asserting that they must prevail does not mean that they will prevail. American troops could find themselves trapped in a long painful conflict against a determined enemy fighting on its home terrain.

As the United States wades deeper into this Iraqi quicksand, the lessons of the bloody counterinsurgency wars in Central America will be tempting to the veterans of the Reagan administration. Those lessons certainly are the most immediate antecedents to many of the architects of the Iraq counterinsurgency.

But the Central American lessons may have limited applicability to Iraq. For one, the Bush administration can't turn to well-entrenched power centers with ideologically committed security forces as the Reagan administration could in Guatemala and other Central American countries. Also, the cultural divide and the physical distance between Iraq and the United States are far greater than those between Central America and the United States.

So even if the Bush administration can hastily set up an Iraqi security apparatus, it may not be as committed to a joint cause with the Americans as the Central American paramilitary forces were with the Reagan administration. Without a reliable proxy force, the responsibility for conducting a scorched-earth campaign in Iraq likely would fall to American soldiers who themselves might question the wisdom and the morality of such an undertaking.

Perhaps one of the lessons of the current dilemma is that George W. Bush may have dug such a deep hole for U.S. policy in Iraq that even Guatemalan-style brutality applied to the Sunni Triangle would only deepen the well of anti-Americanism that already exists in many parts of Iraq and across much of the Islamic world.

In the 1980s, as a correspondent for the Associated Press and Newsweek, Robert Parry broke many of the stories now known as the Iran-Contra Affair. His latest book is Lost History.

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(*http://www.brusselstribunal.org/pdf/DeathSquads3.pdf*)

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- Ambassador to Death Squads - Who is John Negroponte? *(04 June 2004)*
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B - Other Resources *(p 70– p 154)*

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THE BRUSSELLS TRIBUNAL
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- **Ensuring salaried 'sovereignty' (Imad Khadduri, 12 Nov 2008)**

""It is somewhat curious," says Mr Chalabi, "that the intelligence service of a country which is sovereign – that no one really knows who is funding it."
In fact there are very few Iraqis who do not believe they have a very clear idea of who funds Iraq's secret police. Its director is General Mohammed Abdullah Shahwani, who once led a failed coup against Saddam Hussein, and was handpicked by the CIA to run the new security organisation soon after the invasion of 2003. He is believed to have been answering to them ever since.
For all Mr Bush's pious declarations about respecting Iraqi sovereignty, General Shahwani is reported to work primarily for American intelligence. The intelligence service is "not working for the Iraqi government – it's working for the CIA," Hadi al-Ameri, a powerful Shia lawmaker, was quoted as saying three years ago. "I prefer to call it the American Intelligence of Iraq, not the Iraqi Intelligence Service."
The US can quit Iraq, or it can stay. But it can't do both: Iraqis have a clear idea who they believe funds their secret police November 11, 2008

It may be surprisingly "*curious*" for *Al-Chalabi* who knows all about the cosy relationship between some of the Iraqi security forces and the US. He himself brought the 'startup team' to Iraq, posing as his own militia. These were several hundred Iraqis trained by the US in Hungary before the war. Many incidents are attributed to Chalabi's 'own militia' acting outside the law and with impunity.

But then again, *Hadi al-Ameri* is one of Iraq's most notorious armed-militia leaders who is working in close connection with Iran's Revolutionary Guards. He is the Iraqi Interior Ministry who is widely believed to be under the control of the Badr Organisation and its political face SCIRI. See this two years old posting: "Will the US have to reinvade Iraq to depose him?" November 21, 2006

For the record, and to avoid Al-Chalabi any more embarrassing curiousities, there are other Bremer appointed high government officials that have been receiving their salaries, for more than five and a half years now, directly from the Americans and the CIA and not from the Iraqi government. They are:

- The above mentioned head of the "Iraqi" National Intelligene Service - Al-Shawani (see previous posting: The Genocide Option February 05, 2007
- The head of the "Iraqi" Central Bank - Sinan Al-Shibibi
- The presidential advisor - Mowafaq Al-Rubaie
- The head of the High Judicial Council
- The head of the Elections Committee

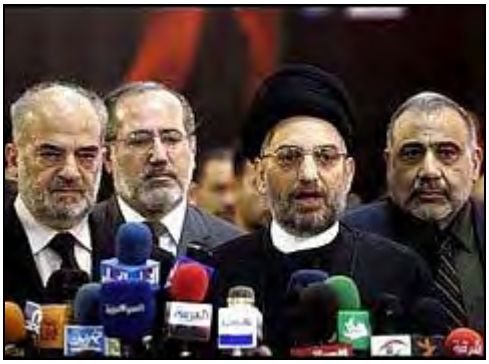
Which other "sovereign" state can boast such paid loyalties, but a SOFA one? (Well, maybe Obama'a Rahm Israel Emanuel)

Al-Shahwani.....Al-Shibibi (on the right) .....





Al-Rubaei (second from left)



posted by Imad Khadduri

- **Iraqis have a clear idea who they believe funds their secret police (11 Nov 2008)**

Patrick Cockburn: The US can quit Iraq, or it can stay. But it can't do both

If it ever comes to court it should be one of the more interesting libel cases of the decade. The Iraqi National Intelligence Service is threatening to sue Ahmed Chalabi, the Iraqi politician, for asking who pays for it.

"It is somewhat curious," says Mr Chalabi, "that the intelligence service of a country which is sovereign – that no one really knows who is funding it."

In fact there are very few Iraqis who do not believe they have a very clear idea of who funds Iraq's secret police. Its director is General Mohammed Abdullah Shahwani, who once led a failed coup against Saddam Hussein, and was handpicked by the CIA to run the new security organisation soon after the invasion of 2003. He is believed to have been answering to them ever since.

The history of the Iraqi intelligence service is important because it shows the real distribution of power in Iraq rather than the spurious picture presented by President Bush. It explains why so many Iraqis are suspicious of the security accord, or Status of Forces Agreement, that the White House has been pushing the Iraqi prime minister Nouri al-Malki to sign. It reveals the real political landscape where President-elect Barack Obama will soon have to find his bearings.

For all Mr Bush's pious declarations about respecting Iraqi sovereignty, General Shahwani is reported to work primarily for American intelligence. The intelligence service is "not working for the Iraqi government – it's working for the CIA," Hadi al-Ameri, a powerful Shia lawmaker, was quoted as saying three years ago. "I prefer to call it the American Intelligence of Iraq, not the Iraqi Intelligence Service."

It seems that not much has changed since then. The intelligence service does now appear in the Iraqi budget as being in receipt of $150 million, though this seems somewhat measly given the extent of its operations, which includes running paramilitary units. One of its main missions is to spy on Iranians on behalf of the US, employing much the same cadre of intelligence officers who carried out this task for Saddam Hussein.

Fear of covert US control is one of the reasons why the Iraqi government has been so intent on insisting that all US forces be out of Iraq by the end of 2011. The latest draft of the security accord has dropped mention of US troops staying behind for training, or making the US withdrawal conditional on improved security in Iraq being maintained.

The American position in Iraq has always been undermined by the fear that, whatever they claimed to be doing in Iraq, their long-term objective was to rule the country. The overthrow of Saddam Hussein, one of the world's more disastrous leaders, was generally popular in Iraq. But the occupation was disliked by the majority of Iraqis from the beginning.

The result of this is that over the last five and a half years America has always been politically weak in Iraq. Put simply, it has very few friends among Iraqis outside Kurdistan. The Shia and Sunni communities have, for their own ends, made tactical alliances with the occupier, but never wanted a permanent presence. Once Iraqis and their neighbours no longer fear that the US intends to rule Iraq directly or indirectly through local nominees then America's position becomes much stronger.

This should be good news for Barack Obama. He wants US combat troops out in 16 months. The Iraqi government largely agrees. But if the presidential election proved anything it was that neither candidate knew much about what was happening Iraq.

John McCain claimed absurdly that the US was on the verge of victory, and during his visits to the Green Zone his staffers annoyed US embassy officials by requesting them not to wear helmets and body armour when standing next the candidate. McCain's people feared this might undermine in the eyes of American television viewers their candidate's claim that US prospects in Iraq were rosier than had been reported.

The key to the US conducting an orderly retreat from Iraq is that this retreat should be real and the US should not try to control essential Iraqi state institutions like the intelligence service. It is also crucial that Obama seriously negotiate with the Iranians. So long as the Iranian leadership thinks that Iraq might be the launching pad for an attack on Iran it will never be in Iranian interests for Iraq to be stabilised.

The same is true of Syria. A problem for Obama is that McCain's quite false claim that America's position in Iraq has become stronger has been largely accepted by the US media so any compromise with Iran can be portrayed as a sell-out.

- **A tidal wave of misery is engulfing Iraq (02 Nov 2008)**

By Michael Schwartz

11/02/08 "Mother Jones" -- -- A tidal wave of misery is engulfing Iraq—and it isn't the usual violence that Americans are accustomed to hearing about and tuning out. To be sure, it's rooted in that violence, but this tsunami of misery is social and economic in nature. It dislodges people from their jobs, sweeps them from their homes, tears them from their material possessions, and carries them off from families and communities. It leaves them stranded in hostile towns or foreign countries, with no anchor to resist the moment when the next wave of displacement sweeps over them.

The victims of this human tsunami are called refugees if they wash ashore outside the country or IDPs ("internally displaced persons") if their landing place is within Iraq's borders. Either way, they are normally left with no permanent housing, no reliable livelihood, no community support, and no government aid. All the normal social props that support human lives are removed, replaced with...nothing.

Overlapping Waves of the Dispossessed

In its first four years, the Iraq war created three overlapping waves of refugees and IDPs.

It all began with the Coalition Provisional Authority, which the Bush administration set up inside Baghdad's Green Zone and, in May 2003, placed under the control of L. Paul Bremer III. The CPA immediately began dismantling Iraq's state apparatus. Thousands of Baathist Party bureaucrats were purged from the government; tens of thousands of workers were laid off from shuttered, state-owned industries; hundreds of thousands of Iraqi military personnel were dismissed from Saddam's dismantled military. Their numbers soon multiplied as the ripple effect of their lost buying power rolled through the economy. Many of the displaced found other (less remunerative) jobs; some hunkered down to wait out bad times; still others left their homes and sought work elsewhere, with the most marketable going to nearby countries where their skills were still in demand. They were the leading edge of the first wave of Iraqi refugees.

As the post-war chaos continued, kidnapping became the country's growth industry, targeting any prosperous family with the means to pay ransom. This only accelerated the rate of departure, particularly among those who had already had their careers disrupted. A flood of professional, technical, and managerial workers fled their homes and Iraq in search of personal and job security.

The spirit of this initial exodus was eloquently expressed by an Iraqi blogger with the online handle of AnaRki13:

"Not so much a migration as a forced exodus. Scientists, engineers, doctors, architects, writers, poets, you name it—everybody is getting out of town.

"Why? Simple: 1. There is no real job market in Iraq. 2. Even if you have a good job, chances are good you'll get kidnapped or killed. It's just not worth it staying here. Sunni, Shiite, or Christian—everybody, we're all leaving, or have already left.

"One of my friends keeps berating me about how I should love this country, the land of my ancestors, where I was born and raised; how I should be grateful and return to the place that gave me everything. I always tell him the same thing: 'Iraq, as you and me once knew it, is lost. What's left of it, I don't want...'

"The most famous doctors and university professors have already left the country because many of them, including ones I knew personally, were assassinated or killed, and the rest got the message—and got themselves jobs in the west, where they were received warmly and given high positions. Other millions of Iraqis, just ordinary Iraqis, left and are leaving—without plans and with much hope."

In 2004, the Americans triggered a second wave of refugees when they began to attack and invade insurgent strongholds, as they did the Sunni city of Falluja in November 2004, using the full kinetic force of their military. Whether the Americans called for evacuation or not, large numbers of local residents were forced to flee battleground neighborhoods or cities. The process was summarized in a thorough review of the history of the war compiled by the Global Policy Forum and 35 other international non-governmental organizations:

"Among those who flee, the most fortunate are able to seek refuge with out-of-town relatives, but many flee into the countryside where they face extremely difficult conditions, including shortages of food and water. Eventually the Red Crescent, the UN or relief organizations set up camps. In Falluja, a city of about 300,000, over 216,000 displaced persons had to seek shelter in overcrowded camps during the winter months, inadequately supplied with food, water, and medical care. An estimated 100,000 fled al-Qaim, a city of 150,000, according to the Iraqi Red Crescent Society (IRCS). In Ramadi, about 70 percent of the city's 400,000 people left in advance of the U.S. onslaught.

"These moments mark the beginning of Iraq's massive displacement crisis."

While most of these refugees returned after the fighting, a significant minority did not, either because their homes (or livelihoods) had been destroyed, or because they were afraid of continuing violence. Like the economically displaced of the previous wave, these refugees sought out new areas that were less dangerous or more prosperous, including neighboring countries. And, as with that first wave, it was the professionals as well as the technical and managerial workers who were most likely to have the resources to leave Iraq.

In early 2005 the third wave began, developing by the next year into the veritable tsunami of ethnic cleansing and civil war that pushed vast numbers of Iraqis from their homes. The precipitating incidents, according to Ali Allawi—the Iraqi finance minister when this third wave began—were initially triggered by the second-wave-refugees pushed out of the Sunni city of Falluja in the winter of 2004:

"Refugees leaving Falluja had converged on the western Sunni suburbs of Baghdad, Amriya and Ghazaliya, which had come under the control of the insurgency. Insurgents, often backed by relatives of the Falluja refugees, turned on the Shi'a residents of these neighbourhoods. Hundreds of Shi'a families were driven from their homes, which were then seized by the refugees. Sunni Arab resentment against the Shi'a's 'collaboration' with the occupation's forces had been building up, exacerbated by the apparent indifference of the Shi'a to the assault on Falluja.

"In turn, the Shi'a were becoming incensed by the daily attacks on policemen and soldiers, who were mostly poor Shi'a men. The targeting of Sunnis in majority Shi'a neighbourhoods began in early 2005. In the Shaab district of Baghdad, for instance, the assassination of a popular Sadrist cleric, Sheikh Haitham al-Ansari, led to the formation of one of the first Shi'a death squads... The cycle of killings, assassinations, bombings and expulsions fed into each other, quickly turning to a full-scale ethnic cleansing of city neighbourhoods and towns."

The process only accelerated in early 2006, after the bombing of the Golden Dome in Samarra, a revered Shiite shrine, and crested in 2007 when the American military "surge" onto the streets of Baghdad loosened the hold of Sunni insurgents on many mixed as well as Sunni neighborhoods in the capital. During the year of the surge all but 25 or so of the approximately 200 mixed neighborhoods in Baghdad became ethnically homogenous. A similar process took place in the city's southern suburbs.

As minority groups in mixed neighborhoods and cities were driven out, they too joined the army of displaced persons, often settling into vacated homes in newly purified neighborhoods dominated by their own sect. But many, like those in the previous waves of refugees, found they had to move to new locales far away from the violence, including a large number who, once again, simply left Iraq. As with previous waves, the more prosperous were the most likely to depart, taking with them professional, technical, and managerial skills.

Among those who departed in this third wave was Riverbend, the pseudonymous "Girl Blogger from Baghdad," who had achieved international fame for her beautifully crafted reports on life in Iraq under the U.S. occupation. Her description of her journey into exile chronicled the emotional tragedy experienced by millions of Iraqis:

"The last few hours in the house were a blur. It was time to go and I went from room to room saying goodbye to everything. I said goodbye to my desk—the one I'd used all through high school and college. I said goodbye to the curtains and the bed and the couch. I said goodbye to the armchair E. and I broke when we were younger. I said goodbye to the big table over which we'd gathered for meals and to do homework. I said goodbye to the ghosts of the framed pictures that once hung on the walls, because the pictures have long since been taken down and stored away—but I knew just what hung where. I said goodbye to the silly board games we inevitably fought over—the Arabic Monopoly with the missing cards and money that no one had the heart to throw away...

"The trip was long and uneventful, other than two checkpoints being run by masked men. They asked to see identification, took a cursory glance at the passports and asked where we were going. The same was done for the car behind us. Those checkpoints are terrifying but I've learned that the best technique is to avoid eye contact, answer questions politely and pray under your breath. My mother

and I had been careful not to wear any apparent jewelry, just in case, and we were both in long skirts and head scarves...

"How is it that a border no one can see or touch stands between car bombs, militias, death squads and... peace, safety? It's difficult to believe—even now. I sit here and write this and wonder why I can't hear the explosions..."

The Human Toll

The number of Iraqis who flooded neighboring lands, not to speak of even approximate estimates of the number of internal refugees, remains notoriously difficult to determine, but the most circumspect of observers have reported constantly accelerating rates of displacement since the Bush administration's March 2003 invasion. These numbers quickly outstripped the flood of expatriates who had fled the country during Saddam Hussein's brutal era.

By early 2006, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees was already estimating that 1.7 million Iraqis had left the country and that perhaps an equal number of internal refugees had been created in the same three-year period. The rate rose dramatically yet again as sectarian violence and ethnic expulsions took hold; the International Organization for Migration estimated the displacement rate during 2006 and 2007 at about 60,000 per month. In mid 2007, Iraq was declared by Refugees International to be the "fastest-growing refugee crisis in the world," while the United Nations called the crisis "the worst human displacement in Iraq's modern history."

Syria, the only country that initially placed no restrictions on Iraqi immigration, had (according to UN statistics) taken in about 1.25 million displaced Iraqis by early 2007. In addition, the UN estimated that more than 500,000 Iraqi refugees were in Jordan, as many as 70,000 in Egypt, approaching 60,000 in Iran, about 30,000 in Lebanon, approximately 200,000 spread across the Gulf States, and another 100,000 in Europe, with a final 50,000 spread around the globe. The United States, which had accepted about 20,000 Iraqi refugees during Saddam Hussein's years, admitted 463 additional ones between the start of the war and mid-2007.

President Bush's "surge" strategy, begun in January 2007, amplified the flood, especially of the internally displaced, still further. According to James Glanz and Stephen Farrell of the New York Times, "American-led operations have brought new fighting, driving fearful Iraqis from their homes at much higher rates than before the tens of thousands of additional troops arrived." The combined effect of the American offensive and accelerated ethnic expulsions generated an estimated displacement rate of 100,000 per month in Baghdad alone during the first half of 2007, a figure that surprised even Said Hakki, the director of the Iraqi Red Crescent, who had been monitoring the refugee crisis since the beginning of the war.

During 2007, according to UN estimates, Syria admitted an additional 150,000 refugees. With Iraqis by then constituting almost 10% of the country's population, the Syrian government, feeling the strain on resources, began putting limits on the unending flood and attempted to launch a mass repatriation policy. Such repatriation efforts have, so far, been largely fruitless. Even when violence in Baghdad began to decline in late 2007, refugees attempting to return found that their abandoned homes had often either been badly damaged in American offensives or, more likely, appropriated by strangers (often of a different sect), or were in "cleansed" neighborhoods that were now inhospitable to them.

In the same years, the weight of displaced persons inside Iraq grew ever more quickly. Estimated by the UN at 2.25 million in September 2007, this tidal flow of internally displaced, often homeless, families began to weigh on the resources of the provinces receiving them. Najaf, the first large city south of Baghdad, where the most sacred Shiite shrines in Iraq are located, found that its population of 700,000 had increased by an estimated 400,000 displaced Shia. In three other southern Shia provinces, IDPs came by mid-2007 to constitute over half the population.

The burden was crushing. By 2007, Karbala, one of the most burdened provinces, was attempting to enforce a draconian measure passed the previous year: New residents would be expelled unless officially sponsored by two members of the provincial council. Other governates also tried in various ways, and largely without success, to staunch the flow of refugees.

Whether inside or outside the country, even prosperous families before the war faced grim conditions. In Syria, where a careful survey of conditions was undertaken in October 2007, only 24% of all Iraqi families were supported by salaries or wages. Most families were left to live as best they could on dwindling savings or remittances from relatives, and a third of those with funds on hand expected to run out within three months. Under this kind of pressure, increasing numbers were reduced to sex work or other exploitative (or black market) sources of income.

Food was a major issue for many families; according to the United Nations, nearly half needed "urgent food assistance." A substantial proportion of adults reported skipping at least one meal a day in order to feed their children. Many others endured foodless days "in order to keep up with rent and utilities." One refugee mother told McClatchy reporter Hannah Allam, "We buy just enough meat to flavor the food -- we buy it with pennies... I can't even buy a kilo of sweets for Eid [a major annual celebration]."

According to a rigorous McClatchy Newspaper survey, most Iraqi refugees in Syria were housed in crowded conditions with more than one person per room (sometimes many more). Twenty-five percent of families lived in one-room apartments; about one in six refugees had been diagnosed with a (usually untreated) chronic disease; and one-fifth of the children had had diarrhea in the two weeks before being questioned. While Syrian officials had aided refugee parents in getting over two-thirds of school-aged children enrolled in schools, 46% had dropped out—due mainly to lack of appropriate

immigration documents, insufficient funds to pay for school expenses, or a variety of emotional issues—and the drop-out rate was escalating. And keep in mind, the Iraqis who made it to Syria were generally the lucky ones, far more likely to have financial resources or employable skills.

Like the expatriate refugees, internally displaced Iraqis faced severe and constantly declining conditions. The almost powerless Iraqi central government, largely trapped inside Baghdad's Green Zone, requires that people who move from one place to another register in person in Baghdad; if they fail to do so, they lose eligibility for the national program that subsidizes the purchase of small amounts of a few staple foods. Such registration was mostly impossible for families driven from their homes in the country's vicious civil war. With no way to "register," families displaced outside of Baghdad entered their new residences without even the increasingly meager safety net offered by guaranteed subsidies of basic food supplies.

To make matters worse, almost three-quarters of the displaced were women or children and very few of the intact families had working fathers. Unemployment rates in most cities to which they were forced to move were already at or above 50%, so prostitution and child labor increasingly became necessary options. UNICEF reported that a large proportion of children in such families were hungry, clinically underweight, and short for their age. "In some areas, up to 90 per cent of the [displaced] children are not in school," the UN agency reported.

Losing Precious Resources

The job backgrounds of an extraordinary proportion of Iraqi refugees in Syria were professional, managerial, or administrative. In other words, they were collectively the repository of the precious human capital that would otherwise have been needed to sustain, repair, and eventually rebuild their country's ravaged infrastructure. In Iraq, approximately 10% of adults had attended college; more than one-third of the refugees in Syria were university educated. Whereas less than 1% of Iraqis had a postgraduate education, nearly 10% of refugees in Syria had advanced degrees, including 4.5% with doctorates. At the opposite end of the economic spectrum, fully 20% of all Iraqis had no schooling, but only a relative handful of the refugees arriving in Syria (3%) had no education. These proportions were probably even more striking in other more distant receiving lands, where entry was more difficult.

The reasons for this remarkable brain drain are not hard to find. Even the desperate process of fleeing your home turns out to require resources, and so refugees from most disasters who travel great distances tend to be disproportionately prosperous, as the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina in New Orleans so painfully illustrated.

In Iraq, this tendency was enhanced by American policy. The mass privatization and de-Baathification policies of the Bush administration ensured that large numbers of professional, technical, and

managerial workers, in particular, would be cast out of their former lives. This tendency was only exacerbated by the development of the kidnapping industry, focusing its attentions as it did on families with sufficient resources to pay handsome ransoms. It was amplified when some insurgent groups began assassinating remaining government officials, university professors, and other professionals.

The exodus into the Iraqi Diaspora has severely depleted the country's human capital. In early 2006, the United States Committee on Refugees and Immigrants estimated that a full 40% of Iraqi's professional class had left the country, taking with them their irreplaceable expertise. Universities and medical facilities were particularly hard hit, with some reporting less than 20% of needed staff on hand. The oil industry suffered from what the *Wall Street Journal* called a "petroleum exodus" that included the departure of two-thirds of its top 100 managers, as well as significant numbers of managerial and professional workers.

Even before the huge 2007 exodus from Baghdad, the United Nations Commissioner of Refugees warned that "the skills required to provide basic services are becoming more and more scarce," pointing particularly to doctors, teachers, computer technicians, and even skilled craftsmen like bakers.

By mid-2007, the loss of these resources was visible in the everyday functioning of Iraqi society. By then, medical facilities commonly required patients' families to act as nurses and technicians and were still unable to perform many services. Schools were often closed, or opened only sporadically, because of an absence of qualified teachers. Universities postponed or canceled required courses or qualifying examinations because of inadequate staff. At the height of an incipient cholera epidemic in the summer of 2007, water purification plants were idled because needed technicians could not be found.

The most devastating impact of the Iraqi refugee crisis, however, has probably been on the very capacity of the national government (which de-Baathification and privatization had already left in a fragile state) to administer anything. In every area that such a government might touch, the missing managerial, technical, and professional talent and expertise has had a devastating effect, with post-war "reconstruction" particularly hard hit. Even the ability of the government to disperse its income (mostly from oil revenues) has been crippled by what cabinet ministers have termed "a shortage of employees trained to write contracts" and "the flight of scientific and engineering expertise from the country."

The depths of the problem (as well as the massive levels of corruption that went with it) could be measured by the fact that the electrical ministry spent only 26% of its capital budget in 2006; the remaining three-quarters went unspent. Yet, at that level of disbursement, it still outperformed most government agencies and ministries in a major way. Under pressure from American occupation officials to improve its performance in 2007, the government made concerted efforts to increase both

its budget and its disbursements for reconstruction. Despite initially optimistic reports, the news was grim by year's end. Actual expenditures on electrical infrastructure might, for example, have slipped to as low as 1% of the budgeted amount.

Even more symptomatic were the few successes in infrastructural rebuilding found by *New York Times* reporter James Glanz in a survey of capital construction throughout the country. Most of the successful programs he reviewed were initiated and managed by officials connected to local and provincial governments. They discovered that success actually depended on avoiding *any* interaction with the ineffective and corrupt central government. The provincial governor of Babil Province, Sallem S. al-Mesamawe, described the key to his province's success: "We jumped over the routine, the bureaucracy, and we depend on new blood—a new team." They had learned this lesson after using provincial money and local contractors to build a school, only to have it remain closed because the national government was unable to provide the necessary furniture.

The government's staggering institutional incapacity is, in fact, a complex phenomenon with many sources beyond the drain of human capital. The flood of managers, professionals, and technicians out of the country, however, has been a critical obstacle to any productive reconstruction. Worse yet, the departure of so many crucial figures is probably to a considerable extent irreversible, ensuring a grim near-future for the country. After all, this has been a "brain drain" on a scale seldom seen in our era.

Many exiles still intend to, even long to, return when (or if) the situation improves, but time is always the enemy of such intentions. The moment an individual arrives in a new country, he or she begins creating social ties that become ever more significant as a new life takes hold—and this is even truer for those who leave with their families, as so many Iraqis have done. Unless this network-building process is disrupted, for many the probability of return fades with each passing month.

Those with marketable skills, even in the dire circumstances facing most Iraqi refugees, have little choice but to keep seeking work that exploits their training. The most marketable are the most likely to succeed and so to begin building new careers. As time slips by, the best, the brightest, and the most important carriers of precious human capital are lost.

The Displacement Tsunami

The degradation of Iraq under the American occupation regime was what initially set in motion the forces that led to the exile of much of the country's most precious human resources—absolutely crucial capital, even if of a kind not usually considered when talk turns to investing in "nation building." How, after all, can you "reconstruct" the ravaged foundations of a bombed-out nation without the necessary professional, technical, and managerial personnel? Without them, Iraq must continue its downward spiral toward a nation of slum cities.



The orgy of failure and corruption in 2007 was an unmitigated disaster for Iraqi society, as well as an embarrassment for the American occupation. From the point of view of long-term American goals in Iraq, however, this storm cloud, like so many others, had a silver lining. The Iraqi government's incapacity to perform at almost any level became but further justification for the claims first made by L. Paul Bremer at the very beginning of the occupation: that the country's reconstruction would be best handled by private enterprise. Moreover, the mass flight of Iraqi professionals, managers, and technicians has meant that expertise for reconstruction has simply been unavailable inside the country. This has, in turn, validated a second set of claims made by Bremer: that reconstruction could only be managed by large outside contractors.

This neoliberal reality was brought into focus in late 2007, as the last of the money allocated by the U.S. Congress for Iraqi reconstruction was being spent. A "petroleum exodus" (first identified by the *Wall Street Journal*) had long ago meant that most of the engineers needed for maintaining the decrepit oil business were already foreigners, mostly "imported from Texas and Oklahoma." The foreign presence had, in fact, become so pervasive that the main headquarters for the maintenance and development of the Rumaila oil field in southern Iraq (the source of more than two-thirds of the country's oil at present) runs on both Iraqi and Houston time. The American firms in charge of the field's maintenance and development, KBR and PIJV, have been utilizing a large number of subcontractors, most of them American or British, very few of them Iraqi.

These American-funded projects, though, have been merely "stopgaps." When the money runs out, vast new moneys will be needed just to sustain Rumaila's production at its present level.

According to *Harper's Magazine* Senior Editor Luke Mitchell, who visited the field in the summer of 2007, Iraqi engineers and technicians are "smart enough and ambitious enough" to sustain and "upgrade" the system once the American contracts expire, but such a project would take upwards of two decades because of the compromised condition of the government and the lack of skilled local engineers and technicians. The likely outcome, when the American money departs, therefore is either an inadequate effort in which work proceeds "only in fits and starts;" or, more likely, new contracts in which the foreign companies would "continue their work," paid for by the Iraqi government.

With regard to the petroleum industry, therefore, what the refugee crisis guaranteed was long-term Iraqi dependence on outsiders. In every other key infrastructural area, a similar dependence was developing: electrical power, the water system, medicine, and food were, *de facto*, being "integrated" into the global system, leaving oil-rich Iraq dependent on outside investment and largesse for the foreseeable future. Now, that's a twenty-year plan for you, one that at least 4.5 million Iraqis, out of their homes and, in many cases, out of the country as well, will be in no position to participate in.

Most horror stories come to an end, but the most horrible part of this horror story is its never-ending quality. Those refugees who have left Iraq now face a miserable limbo life, as Syria and other receiving countries exhaust their meager resources and seek to expel many of them. Those seeking shelter within Iraq face the depletion of already minimal support systems in degrading host communities whose residents may themselves be threatened with displacement.

From the vast out-migration and internal migrations of its desperate citizens comes damage to society as a whole that is almost impossible to estimate. The displacement of people carries with it the destruction of human capital. The destruction of human capital deprives Iraq of its most precious resource for repairing the damage of war and occupation, condemning it to further infrastructural decline. This tide of infrastructural decline is the surest guarantee of another wave of displacement, of future floods of refugees.

As long as the United States keeps trying to pacify Iraq, it will create wave after wave of misery.

Michael Schwartz, professor of sociology at Stony Brook University, has written extensively on popular protest and insurgency. This report on the Iraqi refugee crisis is from his forthcoming Tomdispatch book, War Without End: The Iraq Debacle in Context (Haymarket Books, June 2008). His work on Iraq has appeared on numerous Internet sites, including Tomdispatch, Asia Times, Mother Jones, Information Clearing House and ZNET. His email address is Ms42@optonline.net.

- **State-Sanctioned Paramilitary Terror in Basra Under British Occupation *(Max Fuller, 08 Aug 2008)***

Max Fuller, member of the B*Russell*s Tribunal Advisory Committee.

Articles by the same author:

- '***For Iraq, the Salvador Option Becomes Reality***' | ***"Voor Irak wordt de 'Salvador-optie' realiteit"*** and '***Crying Wolf: Media Disinformation and Death Squads in Occupied Iraq***' ***(www.globalresearch.ca)*** and ***Who is controlling the death squads in Iraq?*** '
- ***The Silence of the Lambs? A Cry to Raise Our Voices! Proof of US orchestration of Death Squads Killings in Iraq*** *(09 March 2007)*
- ***Ghosts of Jadiriyah. A survivor's testimony*** *(14 Nov 2006)*
- ***Balad Massacre once again demonstrates US orchestrated genocide*** *(09 Nov 2006)*
- ***¡Nunca Olvida! Never Forget! The US role in Iraq's death squads*** *(July 2006)*
- ***The Assault on Adhamiya - Not Civil War Yet*** *(July 2006)*

- ***Jihad killings in Baghdad require immediate UN investigation*** *(12 July 2006)*
- ***Conflicting Media Accounts: Evidence of Iraqi Death Squad Conspiracy*** *(26 June 2006)*
- ***Diyala - A Laboratory of Civil War?*** *(20 June 2006)*
- **Website**: ***www.cryingwolf.deconstructingiraq.org.uk***

Abstract

Whilst Iraqi prime minister Maliki's spring offensive in Basra has provoked wide speculation about the extent to which it was an autonomous Iraqi government operation and on its success or lack of success in kerbing the power of the so-called Mahdi Army, the reported capture and execution of one of Basra's most important political figures has gone almost entirely unremarked. From the fragmentary record available, this article examines the role of Yussef Sinawee al Mosawi and his Thar Allah (God's Revenge) militia organisation. In the conflict between Thar Allah and the Basra governor's Fadhila (Virtue) party it is possible to identify a political schism that lies at the heart of Iraq's future, both in terms of ongoing efforts towards Balkanisation and the theft of its oil industry. An examination of Thar Allah and its relations with the world of covert operations also reveals a great deal about the extent of British involvement in the violence that has racked this economically vital city and suggests how counterinsurgency warfare plays an essential role in continuing politics by other means.

The Life, Murderous Times and Enigmatic Death of Sayed Yussef Sinawee al Mosawi

The Enigmatic Death

On 20 April 2008 it was reported on the website *al Badeel al Iraqi* that the leader of the Thar Allah militia Yusuf Mosawi had been executed in Baghdad under the supervision of Abu Mujahid, an adviser to Iraqi Prime Minister Maliki[1].

Few in the west are likely to have even heard of the Thar Allah (God's Revenge) organisation, let alone its chairman, Sayed Yussef Sinawee al Mosawi, yet the detention of this militia-commander-cum-radical-Shiite-cleric as part of the much-slated 'Knights Assault' in Basra in March was important enough within the politics of contemporary Iraq to warrant mention by both the Oil Minister Shahristani[2] and the prime minister himself, speaking in an interview on CNN[3].

If it is true that Mosawi has indeed been executed, whilst many Iraqis might well breathe a sigh of relief, it is beyond any doubt that his killing after just some two weeks' detention constitutes yet another political murder to add to the thousands upon thousands of others of which Mosawi and Thar Allah may very well be a part.

Even amid the chaotic politics and genocidal violence that has gripped Iraq from the outset of the Anglo-American occupation, an examination of the extremist Shiite militia Thar Allah may well offer

seriously concerned onlookers an opportunity to see beyond the popular media paradigms of 'sectarian civil war' and the 'oil and militia' politics of the south.

Murderous Times

Thar Allah is said to have been one of four new Islamist organisations that opened offices in Basra in October 2003.[4] Although Thar Allah has been almost exclusively identified with the internal politics of Basra, it was reported that the organisation already had additional offices in Nasiriyah, Missan and Talha, and intended to open others in Baghdad, Diwaniya and Karbala.[5] In fact, it was subsequently reported than an armed group operating in Baghdad and Tikrit going by the name Thar Allah issued a statement on 1 November 2003 in which it claimed that its membership was drawn from 'all the factions of Iraqi people'. The group is recorded as issuing a statement in which it claimed to be 'hunting down and killing supporters of the Saddam Hussein regime, specifically those who worked in the security and intelligence services'.[6]

It seems extremely likely that this is in fact the same or a related organisation to the 'militant Shia' Thar Allah that appears in Basra less than two weeks later under the leadership of Sayed Yussif al Mosawi, who claims that 'We have confirmed information that groups from al-Qaeda, dozens of them, have crossed the borders from Kuwait and Saudi Arabia ... [and] are here to coordinate with former Saddam men.'[7]

It is precisely at this time that a second wave of killings of members of the former government begins in Basra, with 12 recorded deaths in October alone.[8] From this savage new beginning, these killings are linked with a White Toyota Sedan without plates that will later become identified as the Death Car.[9]

At almost exactly the same time that Thar Allah pops up in Basra and murders of Baathists begin, the British are known to have been not merely deploying raw police onto Basra's streets, but building up a new intelligence apparatus[10], initially identified as the Special Operations Department[11], based at the Jameat police station. The head of this 'hard but effective'[12] 45-man unit was a former member of another Shiite militia, the Badr Brigade, associated with one of the main exiled Iraqi opposition parties (now a major part of government), the Supreme Council for Islamic Revolution in Iraq (SCIRI)(13)[13], yet a murky relationship between Thar Allah and the Special Operations Department already existed. According to anonymous interviews with 'coalition intelligence and military officials' conducted by Knights and Williams on behalf of the Western Institute for Near East Policy (WINEP) in 2006:

While Badr elements in police intelligence identified former Baathists and detained some in unauthorized prisons, other SCIRI-affiliated movements used police supplied intelligence to undertake targeted killings of Sunnis and Shiites accused of Baath-era crimes. The best known of

these organisations was Thar Allah... [Although British forces had strong indicators to suggest such activities were carried out by SCIRI-affiliated groups, the movement's careful courting of the coalition and its use of 'cutouts' such as the police intelligence unit and Thar Allah shielded it from further scrutiny.[14]

However much British forces had been hoodwinked by SCIRI, it is clear that they were aware of the crimes being committed by their own Special Operations Department, as well as Thar Allah. In fact, by early 2004 such crimes had become so apparent that even *The Sunday Times* was accusing the British-backed Police Intelligence of killing former Baath Party members[15], while the Western media in general had recognised that 'groups posing as Islamic parties', including Thar Allah, were meting out brutal street justice, including tracking down former Baathists, running illegal checkpoints, conducting house searches and punishing those 'deemed to have flouted Islamic customs'.[16]

Leaving the Special Operations Department aside for now, given such apparence, the recorded behaviour of British forces towards Thar Allah appears all the more remarkable. One incident in autumn 2003 involved the arrest of six alleged Baathist 'insurgents' by Thar Allah, who apparently confessed on videotape to a number of bombings. The men were held in 'hopes of tracing the remaining plotters' (for which we should undoubtedly read tortured) until the intervention of British forces, who arrested both the six Baathists along with 13 members of Thar Allah, but the Thar Allah militiamen were all released the following day.[17]

By March 2004, British officials still claimed that Thar Allah and other Shiite political groups had generally behaved responsibly.[18] Yet less than a week later, it briefly appeared that British forces had had a change of heart when they are reported to have attempted to evict Thar Allah from its illegally occupied headquarters[19] and confiscated light weapons.[20] But once again, Thar Allah was quickly let off the hook, with the 'coalition apologising to the group and returning its weapons'.[21] In relation to this leniency and in spite of their obligations under International Law, one British officer had this to say: 'We are not in the business of charging around arresting people'. Basra's deputy police chief was even more candid in regard to Thar Allah: 'we share the same views and they help us with security'.

For the remainder of 2004 Thar Allah and its leader Yussef Mosawi seems to disappear from view, presumably left to continue helping the police with security, detaining and murdering former Baathists, imposing brutal street justice a la Sharia law and generally contributing to the 'scores, possibly hundreds' of political assassinations that had been reported by May.[22] Nonetheless, behind the scenes, changes were being made within Basra's intelligence apparatus. According to the journalist Stephen Grey, the British attempted to close down the Special Operations Department, but that 'despite their efforts, it returned in other guises', while the worst abuses were driven underground (at one point British forces discovered that it had been torturing prisoners in a nextdoor nightclub). By the end of the year, Grey records that the Special Operations Department had been renamed the Criminal

Investigation Department. He also claims that the British had spent all year attempting to remove the Chief of Police, identified as Brigadier Ali. However, Ali had refused to go and had established an Internal Affairs Department run by a former Badr member that had been 'conducting an internal reign of terror inside the police'.[23] According to the US State Department, following allegations by the Iraqi police that Internal Affairs was responsible for the killings of 10 former Baathists, the chief of intelligence was removed in December, but retained command of Internal Affairs.[24] In so far as punitive action is concerned, from their anonymous interviews with British insiders, Knights and Williams report that when transition took place in June, British 'entreaties to cull the Jameat threatened deeply entrenched factional interests' and consequently fell on deaf ears. The result was that the 'many factional and sectarian murders committed by the Jameat went unpunished'[25].

Pausing to analyse the period to the end of 2004 briefly, we may note just how remarkable these reports really are. What we are being told is that in the first six to eight months of occupation, the British occupiers of Basra built up an intelligence-based special police unit drawn from selected Shiite militiamen which, in conjunction with certain other paramilitary militia units, more or less instantly set about murdering its political opponents from the former government and imposing an extremist Islamist form of social cleansing. Having set this monster loose on the streets of Basra, British forces then not only failed to reign it in, but on two occasions behaved with what appears to be extraordinary leniency towards one of the associated paramilitary militias, Thar Allah, despite their ongoing obligation to provide security to the residents of Basra. In relation to such heinous derelictions of duty, British spokesmen's responses were to insist that 'we are not in the business of running around arresting people' and that 'violent deBaathification will come to its own conclusion'[26]. Furthermore, despite the failed entreaties to 'cull the Jameat', following 'transition' Assistant Chief Constable Stephen White, a veteran from Northern Ireland, received an OBE for his role in setting up the policing structures in southern Iraq.[27]

A Political Life

On 30 January 2005 Iraqis went to the polls. One of the candidates was Yussef Mosawi, running on behalf of the Thar Allah political party as part of the Coalition of Islamic Basra (*Al-Ittilaf al-Basra al-Islamiyya*), dominated by SCIRI. According to Knights and Williams, the January elections in Basra were 'marred by violent intimidation beforehand and equally brutal recriminations afterwards'.

But the 30 January elections did not mark Mosawi's formal entry into Basra's factious political scene. On 16 January an Iraqi newspaper had already recorded that:

Al-Basra Council has decided to assign to Mr Youssif al-Mossowi, the member of the council and the head of the higher supervisory commission as a daily supervisor for working of checkpoints subordinating for Basra Police leadership...

Al-Mossowi said that his work has been done in coordination with Basra Police Leadership, especially during the night to monitor the negligence and duty elusion, confirming that this realized to guarantee security pre-elections period and ensure security during the election.[28]

So the head of the Islamist Thar Allah militia organisation that had for the previous year been linked to political killings and social cleansing was not only running in the January elections, but *supervising* a political process described as being 'marred by violent intimidation beforehand and equally brutal recrimination afterwards'. On top of that, this man was the head of a 'higher supervisory commission' and ran the police checkpoints that must have allowed his and other paramilitary militiamen unimpeded access to their victims. It is beyond any reasonable doubt that by now British forces must have been fully cognizant of who Mosawi was and had endorsed his role on the higher supervisory commission, where they will undoubtedly have placed their agents and advisers. At this time, not one Iraqi police or military unit was even able to take the lead in operations and we must therefore assume absolutely the deep continuing involvement of British forces at every level of the security apparatus in Basra.[29]

In regard to the 'brutal recriminations afterwards', we may suggest that one of the chief reasons for the such recrimination was that, despite winning 20 of 41 seats on the Basra Provincial Council, the Coalition of Islamic Basra was marginally outgunned by an alliance of the other main parties, dominated by Fadhila (a party of the Sadrist current that does not recognise Muqtada al Sadr as a source of authority). It was from Fadhila that the new governor, Muhamad al-Waeli was drawn, but power in Basra remained deeply divided and the influence of Mosawi and others remained substantial. In fact, according to Knights and Williams, it was precisely at this time that 'Using militiamen serving in the security forces, Sadrist factions and SCIRI affiliates such as Badr and Thar Allah accelerated their intimidation of local university professors, trade unionists, and other secular figures' to the extent that the early months of 2005 'witnessed unprecedented levels of political violence and crime'.[30] Again we must note this qualification that it is militiamen **serving in the security forces** that are responsible for carrying out political violence and intimidation, ie it is the very OBE-worthy institutions established by the British that are responsible for the violence.

An example of this influence in action was demonstrated in what at the time was an extremely mysterious report in *The Telgraph*, describing negotiations on the appointment of a new chief of police between the governor and the head of Thar Allah. According to the report it was obvious that power lay with the 'bearded cleric puffing on a cigarette'.[31] The outcome of these negotiations is illuminating, for the new police chief, Hassan al-Sade, presumably Mosawi's favourite (a later source claims that Sade, a former officer in marine special forces, was appointed by Alawi[32], was the former head of the British trained Tactical Support Unit[33] and a strong supporter of British 'attempts to purge the [police] force of militia elements'.[34]

Whilst the record for Thar Allah again largely goes quiet until October 2005[35], it is known that in response to the success of Fadhila, which at this time also held the Oil Ministry in Baghdad, Thar Allah became part of another SCIRI-led alliance, known as the Pentacle House (*al-Bayt al-Khumasi*), alongside the Badr Organisation, *Sayid al-Shuhada* (Master of Martyrs) and *Mu'assasat Shahid al-Mahrab* (another SCIRI affiliate). According to the International Crisis Group, 'Despite their tense relations, the Sadrists and SCIRI are informally allied against Fadhila' [and remember that it is exactly this combination of Sadrist factions and SCIRI affiliates which is blamed for the violence through its presence in the security forces!].[36]

The significance of the Pentacle House alliance rivalry with Fadhila and its allies is that it defines the key political schism in Basra. Most fundamental, the SCIRI-dominated position leads the charge for the creation of a Shiite super state in the south of Iraq[37], whilst Fadhila and its allies have supported an integrationist, nationalist position, despite assertions that the governor has complained about lack of resources reaching the south[38]. The immediate goal of the Pentacle House alliance is the ousting of Governor Waeli.

In August Thar Allah once more emerges briefly, when it is accused of attempting to murder a former naval officer, indicating its continuing role in political violence. After the family of the naval officer successfully drove off Thar Allah, they were arrested by the police, detained and tortured for over a week.[39]

Before moving on to the most significant episode involving Thar Allah it is first necessary to examine the most spectacular event that took place in Basra in 2005 (at least through the prism of the western media) and which sparked the most dramatic and perhaps unexpected political crisis. In September, two undercover British service personnel in Arab disguise were arrested by Iraqi police and detained at the Jameat police station[40]. The two men were heavily armed (accusations were made that the car in which they were spotted contained bomb-making equipment) and opened fire on the Iraqi police in an attempt to avoid arrest. Rather than negotiate, answer questions about the identities or activities of the two agents or allow the Iraqi legal system to take its course, British forces instead chose to assault the Jameat and release the detainees by force. Several Iraqi civilians were shot dead in the angry protests that the assault provoked, with many Iraqis concluding that the two agents had been planning to plant a bomb in a civilian area[41]. If British forces were not in the business of running around arresting people, it seemed that they were most definitely in the business of running around shooting Iraqis and destroying Iraqi infrastructure rather than face Iraqi scrutiny over the actions of top-secret paramilitary agents. In the event, despite the destruction to the Jameat itself, the two men were actually 'rescued' from another building to which they had been moved by armed militiamen under the nose of the presiding Iraqi judge. Curiously, following the snatch by 'militiamen' the two undercover operatives were better treated[42] and had been left entirely unguarded by the time that British forces recovered them, as though two sets of hands were at work within the Iraqi security apparatus!

The assault of the Jameat produced two obvious and hugely significant consequences. The first was that the governing council under the leadership of Governor Waeli immediately suspended cooperation with the British.

The second was that the governor ordered his own raid just weeks later on 22 October on the headquarters of Thar Allah. The circumstances and consequences of this raid were almost entirely unreported in the western media, but we can being to reconstruct it from a number of partial reports, chief amongst which are a series of testimonials given to the Monitoring Net for Human Rights in Iraq and passed on to the United Nations Assistance Mission in Iraq.[43]

The first key point is that the raid appears to have been devised in response to allegations that government vehicles had been stolen or misused by Thar Allah, specifically in cases of abduction. The second key point is that the raid resulted in the discovery of some 50 illegal detainees (mostly Sunnis and some of them members of the Baath Party according to the testimonials) and the arrest of a similar number of paramilitary militiamen from the Iraqi Lions Movement, which appears to have operated from Thar Allah's headquarters. The militiamen are said to have confessed to carrying out 'rapes, robberies, assassinations, and to extorting money from business owners and university professors'. The third key point is that the police conducting the raid insisted that they had seized evidence implicating Iranian intelligence in recent violence in Basra, including armed attacks and plots to assassinate political leaders (including Governor Waeli). Unsurprsingly, a Thar Allah spokesman insisted that the raid had been politically motivated and that the governor had spread rumours that cars used to commit crimes had been seen near the mosque (HQ) to justify his actions. But perhaps most importantly, we learn from the testimonials that no mere militia commander, fundamentalist cleric, political councillor, head of higher supervisory commission nor overseer of night time checkpoints, Yussef Mosawi is also an official of the Interior Affairs department in the Jamiyat, where he is responsible for police vehicles!

Whatever the exact circumstances, this raid and arrests (reportedly including Mosawi) would appear to have provided an ideal opportunity for British forces to become involved in an effort to expose any Iranian involvement[44], clean up corruption, improve security and perhaps repair relations with the governor. In the event, it seems that the British position was, if anything, obstructive and the raid is almost completely missing in the Western media. If we can assume that the governor did not order a second raid against Thar Allah in 2006, the ICG report *Lessons from Basra* claims that the governor ordered the army and the police to 'launch an offensive' against Thar Allah, but that the two generals in charge refused. The governor was forced to sign a new order, assuming entire responsibility for the operation, in order to carry out the raid. Whatever raid this passage refers to, the important point is that the two recalcitrant generals were the key British allies in Basra and must have discussed the matter with their British counterparts.

In late November, while British forces were conducting an 'underground campaign to stamp out the vicious bloodletting between Sunnis and Shiites'[45], the Ministry of the Interior sent a team with US advisors to shake up the Basra police.[46] The result was the reorganisation of Internal Affairs, with supposedly corrupt officers simply shifted to another department.[47]

The 'underground campaign' itself was described by Knights and Williams as follows:

A wave of further arrests continued throughout the autumn of 2005 into early 2006, with British forces targeting a range of SCIRI, Sadrist and Thar Allah militia cells within the local police forces and municipal organs.[48]

According to several authoritative subsequent write-ups it was this confluence of police intelligence and Thar Allah that the British had moved against. For instance:

In September, British forces first moved against elements of Tharallah and the most corrupt units in the Basra constabulary, including the Department of Internal Affairs, the Criminal Intelligence Unit and the Serious Crimes Unit. Elements from these three organisations work with Tharallah to carry out contract killings and sophisticated roadside bomb attacks on British forces.[49]

It sounded like a promising development from the perspective of the civilian population of Basra, yet the rate of killings actually escalated under the impact of the 'underground campaign', with the majority of attacks 'perpetrated by elements wearing Iraqi police uniform, as well as elements of a special force affiliated with the Iraqi Interior Ministry which was dissolved [ie Internal Affairs]' according to British military commander Alex Wilson.[50] And despite the campaign, Mosawi himself had reappeared to participate in the January 2006 elections.

By May the political crisis sparked after the assault on the Jameat was still not resolved. On 14 May the governor is reported to have organised a demonstration in support of his decision to suspend the chief of police, Hassan Sawadi, to demand the resignation of the new Iraqi Army's Basra-based 10th Division commandeer, General Abdul Latif Thaban and to blame two prominent Shiite clerics for a recent upsurge in violence.[51] It appears the governor's chief criticism had been failure to prevent the ongoing waves of extrajudicial killings.[52]

The day afterwards, 'in Basra, about 2000 followers of Shiite Grand Ayatollah Ali al-Sistani marched in protest at allegations from the regional governor linking local clerics to terrorism.[53] Subsequently we learned that it was Mosawi that had been tasked with organising and leading a demonstration to 'up the ante against Waeli that had 'degenerated into clashes'.[54]

On the same day as these demonstrations the new prime minister, Maliki, was establishing a special Basra Emergency Security Committee. The emergency committee is reported to have struggled to

replace the provincial security committee until a compromise was reached with Waeli, whereby he would head a security committee selected by the prime minister from 'SCIRI, Fadhila and the Sadrist trend politicians'.[55] Unfortunately, we don't know whether Mosawi was appointed to the new security committee, but we do know that by February 2007 he had been appointed to the role of deputy governor[56] and by April 2008 he was described as a 'prominent and feared member of Basra's provincial council and security committee'![57] If Britain's 'underground campaign' had been designed to curb violence it was an abject failure; if it had been designed to curb the power and influence of Thar Allah and Yussef Mosawi it was equally ineffectual. In fact, Thar Allah continued to operate with the same brazen sense of impunity.

In June 2006 in a predawn raid 20 gunmen dressed in commando camouflage are reported to have stormed a police station to free three members of Thar Allah charged with killing police officers.[58] Then in July, taking a break from killing Baathists and other political opponents, it was Yossef Mosawi who took charge of recruiting and enlisting militants to fight alongside Hezbollah guerrillas in Lebanon.[59]

The year of 2006 climaxed with yet another dramatic and seemingly inexplicable[60] episode under the auspices of Britain's latest effort to rehabilitate the police force and prepare for handover of authority, Operation Sinbad. On Christmas Day British forces conducted a second major assault on the Jameat police station (said to have been demolished the first time).[61] The huge military operation was now targeted primarily against the Serious Crimes Unit and culminated with the early morning demolition of the entire complex using bar mines. Whilst detainees were apparently rescued[62], computers were retrieved and the operation was touted as something of a success, it is difficult to entirely share the sense of jubilation. Despite or because of the huge military operation, the Serious Crimes Unit itself had already vacated the premises![63] (The farce seems to have been entirely lost on most journalists, especially the BBC's Huw Williams, who claimed 'the demolition of the building was a visible symbol of the hope that the serious crimes carried out by police officers based there should now come to an end'!]) According to a Basra governate official, it was the Major Crimes Unit [sic] that had been penetrated both by Iranians and by Tha'r Allah members, while *The Times* agreed that the Serious Crimes Unit worked with Thar Allah to carry out contract killings and deadly roadside attacks.[64]

Following the arrest of just seven members of the 400-strong Serious Crimes Squad and its rehabilitation elsewhere under the new title of the Major Crimes Unit (No doubt for Huw Williams this would have constituted a semantic symbol of hope!), neither Thar Allah nor Yussef Mosawi disappeared from the scene. Equally, the conflict between Fadhila and the SCIRI-Thar Allah axis continued to simmer throughout 2007, with both SCIRI and Tha'r Allah calling in March for swift local elections in hopes of displacing Waeli.[65] These elections seem to have become the main focus of attention in 2007, with one Thar Allah commander stating that he had told all city council members that 'You have to make a choice. You either vote against the governor or you die'.[66] In August Mosawi

himself claimed that 'We are prepared for the upcoming battle, and concrete barriers won't save [Fadhila],' and that if local elections 'aren't held, we will use force to kick Fadhila out'.[67] Thar Allah's centrality was hinted at in several more articles in the Western media, which highlighted both the ready access to patronage that Mosawi was able to enjoy as well as his ongoing role in the paramilitary arena.[68] In September, Mosawi was actually able to roll out for a visiting journalist a classified map of the city prepared by the British military, showing the level of violence in July.[69] Though when asked how he had obtained the map, Mosawi joked 'They steal it for us', it seems much more likely that Basra's deputy governor had access to such maps from his role on the security committee, if not to any other official or quasi-official secrurity appointments.

The Knights' Assault and the Sons of Basra

Against a backdrop of ongoing violence, the stage appeared to be set for an epic confrontation between the SCIRI-Thar Allah axis and Fadhila. According to Mosawi:

The local conflict cannot be separated from the broader struggle between West and East because of Basra's strategic location and vast resources ... Now, Basra is at the crossroads of an Iranian-American struggle, an Iranian-Arab struggle, the struggle between factions inside Iran and an American war against Islam as a whole. Every actor in this string of conflicts is striving to take up positions in Basra to influence the course of events. Iran is supporting the Islamist parties with which it has enjoyed longstanding ties, whereas the US is supporting local and regional forces that are capable of challenging Iran's influence.[70]

One year after his geopolitical assessment, this 'powerful young warlord' had been arrested by Iraqi and Coalition forces during the major spring 2000 offensive known as the Knights' Assault.

So was this the 'upcoming battle' at the crossroads of so many struggles for which Thar Allah had been preparing, and could the seeming demise of this militant cleric popularly believed to have been an Iranian agent[71] at the hands of Iraqi and Coalition forces signal a victory in the East verses West, Iran verses America geopolitical conflict for influence?

Addressing the second question, we can say not if we are to believe Musawi, who apparently never saw himself or Thar Allah as one of the Iran-backed Islamist parties! In fact, Musawi accused just about everyone else, including Fadhila, of operating in the interests of Iran[72]. But nor, apparently, did he see himself as an ally of the West, insisting that 'Coalition forces are usurpers, plunderers, and occupiers and must be resisted... I am doing that'.[73]

To the first question, the answer may yet well be yes. Whilst a great deal of speculation has surrounded the Knights' Assault[74], it's apparent failure and the apparent division it shows between prime minister Maliki and the US[75], it is very possible that most of the authors of such speculation have overlooked

its critical dimensions in their haste to pigeonhole the current dynamic as anti-Sadrist (just as they insisted on pigeonholing previous dynamics as anti-al Qaeda or as sectarian conflict or even as attempts to stem 'sectarian violence'). In addition to ostensibly cracking down on Thar Allah, the offensive also targeted 'elements from al-Fadhila' and others[76]. Among the moves was the disbanding of the Oil Protection Force, widely regarded as the military power base of Fadhila, and its replacement by an Interior Ministry controlled Oil Police[77].

These operations by a government which draws much of its support from one half of the SCIRI-Thar Allah axis may very well represent efforts to exert control in the two principle and related issues that confront Iraq. The first issue is that of the upcoming provincial elections scheduled for October 2008, dominated in this region by the issue of the creation of a southern nine-province Shiite superstate whose existence will mark a major step on the road towards partition that so many imperialist ideologues have long advocated. Whilst Waeli appears pleased by the results of the Knights Assault, claiming that Basra is no longer dominated by 'militias'[78], it remains very much to be seen what the election will bring in terms of Iraq's future.

The second issue is the privatisation of Iraq's oil industry. With the moves against the Oil Protection Force and Fadhila, amid charges of smuggling, it appears Maliki may be attempting to unseat those forces that have stood in the way of a privatisation agenda that seems set to see the return of the same oil companies expelled by the Baath in 1972[79]. Once again, only time will truly reveal how successful these efforts will be.

If Thar Allah and Yussef Mosawi have truly been removed from the scene, it is perhaps because they have already fulfilled their purpose, whatever agenda they may have believed it was they served. If we glance briefly at the record, insofar as it is known, of this fundamentalist Shiite paramilitary militia, it appears that Thar Allah functioned as one arm of a secret security apparatus that has been instrumental in eliminating the vestiges of the former state as well as carrying out a policy of sectarian cleansing that we are told has almost emptied Iraq's second city of its Sunni population[80] and enforcing an Islamic authoritarianism that must undoubtedly contribute to the suppression of dissenting voices.

It now appears that the reign of terror that Thar Allah and such other 'cutouts' as the police intelligence unit have imposed on Basra are likely to have served the long-term interests of both the architects of Iraq's Balkanisation and the oil majors looking for a 'foot in the door', since both these projects seem to have accorded with the SCIRI-Thar Allah axis. Perhaps it is small wonder then to learn from the *New York Times* That US intelligence agents were working with the intelligence unit in the Jameat, passing on 'tips, like the location of people suspected of being insurgents', knowing full well that they would find their way into the hands of Basra's death squads[81]. Similarly, the explanation that Thar Allah and its cohorts wittingly or unwittingly operated in the interests of the

occupation is the only possible serious explanation for the record of impunity that we encounter, especially including the return of arms to an organisation that had already been linked with political killings and the presence of its leader in key security positions.

In fact, for anyone who has looked at covert warfare and its role in counterinsurgency operations, the use of such paramilitary militias as an instrument of state policy is not only plausible, it is fundamental! The primary mechanism for conducting such intelligence-based counterinsurgency warfare is the consolidation of a specialist intelligence-gathering agency, which both provides the targets for and handles a range of paramilitary actors who carry out a strategy for which, out of political expediency (due to its fundamental illegality and immorality), the state must remain distanced. The US has carried out such strategies with great vigour in its interventionist wars in South-East Asia and Latin America. The victims, intended and unintended, run into hundreds of thousands. But it was Britain, as it was gradually divested of its colonial possessions after the Second World War, that wrote the modern handbook of counterinsurgency. Those who continue to doubt that the use of proxy paramilitaries, counter-terror and so-called pseudo operations are particularly 'British' or somehow outside the 'rules of cricket' should read the works of General Frank Kitson, who gained his experience dealing with 'civil revolts' in Kenya, Malaya, Oman, Cyprus and Northern Ireland.[82]

It was Kitson's principles that were eventually to be deployed in the conflict in Northern Ireland and which led to the creation of a culture of collusion between the special branch of the RUC, a secretive military intelligence outfit known as the Force Research Unit and Loyalist Protestant paramilitaries in which Catholics could be murdered with impunity, according to the findings of the Metropolitan Police Commisser Sir John Stevens[83]. An account of the experience of this state-sanctioned violence by Jeffrey Slukka is deeply instructive for an understanding of the situation in Iraq.[84]

Just as in Iraq, we find that the popular media portrayal of this violence was to stereotype it as intercommunal sectarian violence. In Northern Ireland patient study and courageous investigation has revealed that far from constituting a cycle of 'tit for tat' revenge killings (the same label that is continually applied in Iraq), the majority of the victims were Catholic civilians murdered for the most part by serving and former members of the security forces, moonlighting in organisations that went by names like the Ulster Volunteer Force and Ulster Freedom Fighters.

Again, it may be of surprise to some to discover that even after the exposure of the activities of the Force Research Unit, action has not been taken to prosecute those responsible for creating the 'culture of collusion'; instead it seems that the unit has been shipped more or less wholesale to Iraq, where it plies its trade under the similarly innocuous sounding title of the Joint Support Group, with its primary mission being 'to recruit and run covert human intelligence sources or agents'.[85] In Northern Ireland such covert human intelligence sources or agents included paramilitary killers like Brian

Nelson, head of intelligence for the Ulster Defence Association and Albert Baker, whose gang was responsible for the notorious 'Romper Room' murders.[86]

So if for a moment we step outside the media paradigm of rival Iranian-backed Shiite militias all competing over the smuggling of oil while simultaneously turning Basra into an Islamist hell, despite the best efforts of British forces, we can simply ask what should we expect the application of counterinsurgency warfare to look like in Basra. Put simply, we should expect to find a security committee at provincial level coordinating the combined efforts of a range of civil, military, police and para-military organisations. Below this we should expect to find some sort of centralised 'special branch' joint intelligence establishment that would include interrogation facilities, where British and/or American advisors would oversee an expansive intelligence gathering operation aimed not so much at 'terrorists' or individual fighters, but at the 'subversive' civilian 'infrastructure' of their political opponents, whether that be members of political parties or activists within supposed 'front' organisations, such as human rights agencies or trades unions. The 'intelligence' acquired primarily through interrogation would then be passed down to the various agencies, sometimes via 'cutouts', for target identification. At the extremity of this apparatus would be paramilitary units, specifically intended to maintain the maximum possible distance between the architects of the counterinsurgency policy and the application of this method of warfare.

In Basra we catch glimpses of a higher supervisory commission and security committee whose role is to coordinate security operations. We find a major intelligence operations facility established by the British housing a Special Operations Deparatment-cum-Criminal Investigation Department where detainees are routinely interrogated/tortured. Here we find the presence of US intelligence agents/advisers, whose role is to compile lists of suspected enemies. We find that the majority of 'militia violence' is carried out by agents who are at the same time members of the security forces. And we can just make out one specific paramilitary unit whose mandate includes eliminating members of the former ruling party on the pretext of security, whose leader enjoys privileged access to classified military maps and operates the nightly curfew, and which has been repeatedly and inexplicably nurtured by British forces. With this in mind, it is not hard to understand how a paradigm of failure, lack of planning, foreign infiltration, etc, etc must be preferred by the powerful to the only other conceivable alternative.

The execution of Yussef Mosawi, however deserved it may appear to have been, has done nothing to advance accountability or justice in post-invasion Iraq. Instead it must be seen as yet another political act of violence in a long and gruesome chain whose object is to protect the guilty and conceal the truth. In the absence of a far more thorough exposure of the secret war in Basra, it is foolhardy at the very least to attempt political analyses that cannot even establish the true relationships of the various actors.

To the consternation and embarrassment of the British state, the photograph of a number of British soldiers recently appeared in the *The Purple Standard*, a publication which praises the exploits of the outlawed Ulster Volunteer Force, a banned loyalist paramilitary group. The soldiers were pictured in Basra wearing orange sashes and playing flutes to their office, under the title 'The Rising Sons of Basra'.[87] As our eyes recover from the dazzling glow of the media spotlights and begin to accustom themselves to the dim world of paramilitary counterinsurgency warfare, we may begin to see that the Rising Sons of Basra are the Sons of Northern Ireland, are the Sons of Rhodesia, are the Sons of Kenya, are the Sons of Malaya, and are the Sons of every conflict where a blood-red sun refuses to finally set on the neo-colonial vestiges of Empire.

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Footnotes

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[1] "Leader of Tharallah militia died under torture", Roads to Iraq, 20 April 2008 – URL: http://www.roadstoiraq.com/2008/04/20/leader-of-tharallah-militia-died-under-torture/

[2] "Basra strike against Shiite militias also about oil", Sam Dagher, *Christian Science Monitor*, 9 April 2008

[3] "Transcript: Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki on Iraq", *CNN*, 7 April 2008

[4] "Revenge Drives String of Killings in Basra", Joel Brinkley, *The New York Times*, 31 October 2003

[5] RESPONSES TO INFORMATION REQUESTS (RIRs), IRQ42228.E, 15 January 2004, Immigration and Refugee Board Canada. There is no further indication of what happened to these offices, but it is perfectly possible that they have continued in existence under the same or another name.

[6] "A Survey of Armed Groups in Iraq", Kathleen Ridolfo, *Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty*, 4 June 2004 [The ULR of this article is no longer valid; a version of the same document can be found on Global Security, but the original reference to Tha'r Allah has been split into a non-descript sentence on Tha'r Allah and a separate entry for 'Vengeance Detachments' containing all the information originally attributed to Tha'r Allah. The version of the document that I first saw can still be obtained as a PDF from SmallWarsJournal.com. Whilst the original document is dated 4 June 2004, the PDF was created on 11 June 2005, which may suggest that the document was altered after that date – ULR: http://smallwarsjournal.com/documents/iraqsurvey.pdf]

[7] "Al-Qaeda scare has Basra on edge", Omar Hasan, *IOL*, 12 November 2003

[8] "Revenge killings thin ex-Baathists' ranks", Joel Brinkley, *New York Times*, November 1, 2003

[9] The first reference to a Death Car was made by Steven Vincent, a freelance American reporter, who wrote in August 2005 that a white Toyota Mark II was used by off-duty police officers in the pay of extremist religious group to perpetrate many of the 100s of assassinations in Basra each month ("Switched Off in Basra", 31 July 2005). Shortly after Vincent's highly critical report of British 'negligence' was published, Vincent was himself snatched by gunmen in a police vehicle and subsequently murdered. References to this and another make of car associated with death squad killings in Basra were made by an eye witness who linked them with the department of Internal Affairs (see endnote 46).

[10] "Human rights protection and promotion vital in the transition period", Amnesty International, 28 June 2004.

[11] "Iraqi Secret Police Operating in al-Basrah", Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, 30 January 2004

[12] This glib comment was made by Capt Shay Marks, a British military spokesman. "Iraqi Party Goes From Exiled to Electable", Anthony Shadid, *Washington Post*, 14 February 2004

[13] Now renamed simply the Simply Islamic Council for Iraq.

[14] *The Calm Before the Storm: The British Experience in Southern Iraq*, Michael Knights and Ed Williams, Washington Institute for Near East Policy, Policy Focus 66, February 2007, p15

[15] "Iraqi Secret Police Operating in al-Basrah", *Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty*, 30 January 2004

[16] "Iraqi Party Goes From Exiled to Electable", Anthony Shadid, *Washington Post*, February 14, 2004; "Iraqis Battle Gangs in Basra", Nicholas Blanford, *The Christian Science Monitor*, 24 March 2004; "Islamic groups' rise may lead to greater conflict", Jack Fairweather, *The Telegraph*, 7 April 2004. Incidents of what appeared to be Islamist social cleansing included a number of massacres of street alcohol vendors. When British forces intervened in one such incident on 1 February 2004, killing two of the attackers, they discovered that the 'militiamen' included a number of 'plainclothes police' that had teamed up with vigilantes; a British army spokesman, Shay Marks, insisted that the soldiers had stumbled upon a plainclothes police operation cracking down on a criminal gang ("Killings of Vendors in Iraqi City Drive Alcohol Sales Off Streets", Edward Wong, *The New York Times*, 18 February 2004).

[17] "Iraqis battle gangs in Basra", *Christian Science Monitor*, 24 March 2004.

[18] *ibid*.

[19] The headquarters may well have been the offices of a women's rights organisation, said to have been taken over by Tha'r Allah in a later report; the women were threatened with death if they returned. "The Roots of Iraqi Secularism", Healing Iraq, 12 October 2004 – URL: http://healingiraq.blogspot.com/archives/2004_10_01_healingiraq_archive.html

[20] A Weekly Review of Developments in and Pertaining to Iraq, 2 April 2004, Volume 7, Number 12, RADIO FREE EUROPE/ RADIO LIBERTY; "One American killed in al-Falouja; Annan: work is underway to form a multinational force", ArabicNews.com, 3/30/2004 – URL: http://www.arabicnews.com/ansub/Daily/Day/040330/2004033012.html

[21] "Islamic groups' rise may lead to greater conflict", Jack Fairweather, *The Telegraph*, 7 April 2004

[22] "Killings of civilians in Basra and al-'Amara", Amnesty International, 11 May 2004

[23] "Iraq: our fatal blunder", Stephen Grey, *New Statesman*, 3 October 2005"; some further observations were published by Stephen Grey in an internet photo diary now removed from the web.

[24] "In Basra, Militia Controls by Fear", Richard A Oppel Jr, *The New York Times*, 9 October 2005

[25] *The Calm Before the Storm: The British Experience in Southern Iraq*, Michael Knights and Ed Williams, Washington Institute for Near East Policy, Policy Focus 66, February 2007, p29

[26] "Rule of the death squads", Stephen Grey, *New Statesman*, 15 March 2004

[27] "Officer honoured for Iraq role", *BBC*, 12 June 2004

[28] "Supervisory Commission to Control Chcckpoints", *Al Sabaah*, 16 January 2005 – URL: http://horse.he.net/~swiftpow/phpBB2/viewtopic.php?t=14632&postdays=0&postorder=asc&start=60

[29] In May Britain's senior police adviser, Deputy Chief Constable Colin Smith, another veteran from Northern Ireland, insisted that he was optimistic and that the ability of the Basra police force to patrol and investigate crimes was an 'exponential development ("Basra out of control, says chief of police", Rory Carroll, *The Guardian*, 31 May 2005). As late as September 2005, shortly before the arrest of 2 undercover SAS operatives, Chief Inspector Amanda Cooke, a senior British adviser to the Iraqi police in southern Iraq, absolutely refuted the accusation that the police in Basra had been thoroughly infiltrated by Shiite militiamen and took part in a campaign of assassination: 'I'm 100 per cent sure that people [at Camp Apache] are working for the common good' ("Camp Apache, the Iraqi police academy that relies on Britons", Jonny Beardsall, *The Telgraph*, 22 September 2005).

[30] *The Calm Before the Storm: The British Experience in Southern Iraq*, Michael Knights and Ed Williams, Washington Institute for Near East Policy, Policy Focus 66, February 2007, p27

[31] "Clerics become powerbrokers in the South", Jack Fairweather, *The Telegraph*, 14 February 2005

[32] "Basra out of control, says chief of police", Rory Carroll, *The Guardian*, 31 May 2005

[33] The Tactical Support Unit in Basra was the equivalent of the Special Police Commandos and Public Order Brigades deployed elsewhere in Iraq, ie. a high-end, specialist paramilitary counterinsurgency unit tied in closely with intelligence-based operations. See "US Collusion with Iraqi Death Squads", Max Fuller, Global Research, 26 June 2006 for a detailed description of such units at work.

[34] "After seven British deaths in a week, Basra's police chief is linked to terrorists", Oliver Poole, *The Telegraph*, 15 May 2006

[35] In a largely unexplained incident in March 2005, Yusif al Musawi leads a hundreds-strong demonstration against the Danish port operating company Maersk, which had illegally taken control of the important facililty of Khor as Zubayr, leading to the company's eviction. Musawi is alleged to have accused the head of Maersk security of being a Jewish spy who should have been killed a long time ago ("Iraqi Port Weathers Danish Storm", Lotte Dolke Kaarsholm, Charlotte Aagaard and Osama Al-Habahbeh, CorpWatch, 31 January 2006).

[36] *Where is Iraq Heading? Lessons from Basra*, Crisis Group Middle East Report No 67, 25 June 2007, p7

[37] "As British troops exit Basra, Shiites vie to fill power vacuum", *Christian Science Monitor*, 17 September 2007

[38] Whilst the International Crisis Group report (op cit.) claims that Fadhila has attempted to strengthen Basra's autonomy, perhaps on the basis of a union of three provinces, there is no doubt that the party has opposed the SCIRI-lead scheme for a nine-province federal region and a Fadhila party member, Abu Zaineb al-Edani, claims, 'We're the only party that has a national agenda,' ("Battling for Power in Basra", Insitute of War and Peace Reporting, *ICR No 230*, 7 August 2007). At the same time, Knights and Williams (op cit.) record that the Fadhila governor, under pressure from his backers in the Southern Oil Company and General Union of Oil Employees, has taken a tough line with foreign oil companies and has drafted legislation intended to limit foreign involvement in the oil sector; the ICG report also highlights that Fadhila went so far as to cut off electricity to Baghdad to counter a SCIRI-backed Kurdish drive to open up the oil sector to foreign investment!

[39] "US reporter murdered in Iraq had written his own epitaph", James Hider, *The Times*, 4 August 2005.

[40] See "Playing with fire", Ali Rifat, Michael Smith and Richard Woods, *The Sunday Times*, 24 September 2005 for a good example of mainstream reporting of the event; see "Breaking Iraq and Blaming Iran", Andrew G Marshall, Global Research, 3 July 2008, for a useful summary of the evidence relating to the event.

[41] Abdel Hadi al-Daraji, said to be Muqtada al Sadr's top official in Basra, accused Britian of plotting to start an ethnic war by carrying out bombings targeting Shia civilians and then blaming the attacks on Sunni Arab groups ("Shia militia fies up anti-British hatred after SAS rescue", Adrian Blomfield, *The Telegraph*, 23 September 2005).

[42] According to one source, 'when the soldiers were eventually moved to another house, the mood of their captors changed and that although their hands remained bound together they were treated quite well before being freed' ("Captured SAS men 'spying on drill torturer'", Sean Rayment, *The Telegraph*, 16 October 2005).

[43] *Special Report: Testimonials Regarding human rights in Basra*, Monitoring of Human Rights in Iraq, 8 April 2006. See also: "Abducted Lawyer in Iraqi Trail Slain", 22 October 2005; Iraqi Resistance Report, 22 October 2005; the website of Juan Cole, 23 October 2005; "Prime Minister Visits al-Basrah to Assess Situation", *Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty*, 25 October 2005; "Iraqi Security Forces Close in on Parties Tied to Iran", *Al Zaman*, 29 October 2005; *Where is Iraq Heading? Lessons from Basra*, Crisis Group Middle East Report No 67, 25 June 2007, p13.

[44] One of two cover explanations for the undercover British presence in Basra, as narrated by an 'inside source', was that a team of 24 SAS was attempting to prevent bombers entering the city from Iran ("Playing with fire", Ali Rifat, Michael Smith and Richard Woods, *The Sunday Times*, 24 September 2005), while Blair publicly accused Iran of exporting technology and explosives to guerrillas in Basra shortly after the raid ("Iraq police are among 12 seized by British forces in Basra raid", Rory Carroll, *The Guardian*, 8 October 2005. A second explanation for the undercover presence – that the SAS was spying on a senior police commander who had been torturing prisoners – was subsequently 'revealed' as the 'real story' by equally anonymous military sources ("Captured SAS men 'spying on drill tortureer'", Sean Rayment, *The Telegraph*, 16 October 2005).

[45] "British investigate Basra torture claims", Brian Brady, *Scotland on Sunday*, 20 November 2005

[46] "A 'quagmire' as violence upsets efforts to reconstitute Iraqi police forces", Michael Moss, *The New York Times*, 24 May 2006. In an undated episode contained within the testimonials collated by Monitoring of Human Rights in Iraq that may or may not relate to this raid, after one of the so-called death cars had been traced back to Interior Affarirs and its occupants arrested, the then Interior Minister Bayan Jabr ordered Governor Waeli to release the car and crew or face the cancellation of the Basra governate and its various entities! There was no outcry in support of the governor to be found in the British or international media.

[47] Each of the six members of this totally corrupt 'rogue' unit that tortured prisoners to death with drills that was actually charged was acquitted for 'lack of evidence' due to witness intimidation, presumably including Britain's Special Air Service! (*ibid*.). Maj. Peter Cripps, a British military spokesman, revealed that the members of Internal Affairs simply 'got jobs in another department' ("Iran-Iraq: Brits Crack Down on Basra's Police", *Associated Press*, 25 January 2006).

[48] Two sets of arrests are recorded, the first of '12 Iraqis, including police officers, who were suspected of involvement in attacks against collation forces' on 7 October 2005 (ie. Prior to the governor's raid against Thar Allah; "Iraq police are among 12 seized by British forces in Basra raid", Rory Carroll, *The Guardian*, 8 October 2005), and the second of 14 people, including 'influential members of the serious crimes and internal affairs units, including Maj. Jassim al-Daraji, assistant director of Basra's criminal intelligence department, on 24 January 2006 ("British, Danish troops seize police in Iraqi raids" *Reuters*, 24 January 2006; "Iran-Iraq: Brits Crack Down on Basra's Police", *Associated Press*, 25 January 2006). In the first instance, we may guess that these included the six members of Internal Affairs subsequently released, while in the second we are told that nine were immediately released, while five were jailed 'for alleged roles in murder and other crimes'. According to a member of the Basra governing council, the January arrests included 12 intelligence officers, provoking fury from the governor, who intended to issue a resolution to expel the British from the city ("British Forces Arrest 12 Police Officers in Basrah", *Al-Hayat*, 25 January 2006). Bear in mind that it was the governor who

actually raided Thar Allah to much consternation, while western analysts insist the Brit were cracking down on Thar Allah cells, but in actual fact appear to have been arresting police presumably loyal to the governor!

[49] "Shiite factional struggles threaten Iraqi stability", TheHill.com

[50] "Iraq Blunders 2: co-opting the militia", Adam Smith MP, 23 March 2006.

[51] Fayrouz in Beaumont blog, 14 May 2006; "Forty killed in Iraq carnatge", 15 May 2006.

[52] "Terror links cost Basra police chief his job", Agencies, 14 May 2006. In Waeli's own words: 'I am astonished at the murders of the past week in Basra, where the police haven't made any kind of investigation'.

[53] *Ibid*.

[54] "As British troops exit Basra, Shiites vie to fill power vacuum", *Christian Science Monitor*, 17 September 2007. Juan Cole also refers to Thar Allah's role in leading demonstrations in his blog for 16 May 2006.

[55] *The Calm Before the Storm: The British Experience in Southern Iraq*, Michael Knights and Ed Williams, Washington Institute for Near East Policy, Policy Focus 66, February 2007, p32

[56] *idid*. P30

[57] *Provincial Politics in Iraq*, Michael Knights and Eamon McCarthy, Washington Institute for Near East Policy, Policy Focus 81, April 2008, p5

[58] "Raid frees 17 Iraqis abducted in Baghdad", John F Burns, *The New York Times*, 23 June 2006

[59] "Iranian Volunteers Set Off for Lebanon", Brian Murphy, *Associated Press*, 26 July 2006

[60] Andrew G Marshall has suggested that the raid was one of the last in a series of efforts to destroy the evidence related to the activities of the two undercover British servicemen arrested in September 2005 ("Breaking Iraq and Blaming Iran", Global Research, 3 July 2008). It does seem perfectly likely that the Christmas assault was connected to the ongoing feud with elements of the Iraqi police that had drifted beyond British control, but it is also quite possible that the evidence that they commandeered related much more widely to the operations of the intelligence unit and its paramilitary cohorts, perhaps as part of the process of British withdrawal. An analogous event might be the break into the very secure Castelreagh complex in Northern Ireland, which housed the Special Branch, an

interrogation centre and the Force Research Unit, on 17 March 2002. Just three men managed to walk out with files, documents and computerised information relating to the British covert war in Ulster.

[61] "UK troops storm Iraqi police HQ", *BBC*, 25 December 2006; "British Raid Basra Police Station", *Associated Press*, 25 December 2006.

[62] Curiously, according to the chief of police of the time, 20 of the most dangerous prisoners accused of planting bombs, apparently vanished with the British raid ("Reduced to rubble ... British troops launch Christmas raid on the 'station of death'", Dominic Kennedy and Ned Parker, *The Times*, 26 December 2006.

[63] "British military finds 'appalling' Iraqi prison cell", Marc Santora, *The New York Times*, 26 December 2006

[64] *Where is Iraq Heading? Lessons from Basra*, Crisis Group Middle East Report No 67, 25 June 2007, p8; "Horrors that mirrored Saddam's worst excesses", Dominic Kennedy and Ned Parker, *The Times*, 26 December 2006

[65] *Where is Iraq Heading? Lessons from Basra*, Crisis Group Middle East Report No 67, 25 June 2007, p16

[66] "Battling for Power in Basra", *ICR No. 230*, Institute of War and Peace Reporting, 7 August 2007

[67] "Militias Compete like 'Mafia Families' over Oil Rackets and Public Resources", 13 August 2007

[68] "As British troops exit Basra, Shiites vie to fill power vacuum", *Christian Science Monitor*, 17 September 2007; "Strong Like Saddam", Kevin Peraino**,** *Newsweek*, 9 October 2007

[69] "As British troops exit Basra, Shiites vie to fill power vacuum", *Christian Science Monitor*, 17 September 2007

[70] *Where is Iraq Heading? Lessons from Basra*, Crisis Group Middle East Report No 67, 25 June 2007, p7

[71] *ibid.* p8

[72] *ibid.*

[73] "As British troops exit Basra, Shiites vie to fill power vacuum", *Christian Science Monitor*, 17 September 2007

[74] For an intelligent discussion, see "Breaking Iraq and Blaming Iran", Andrew G Marshall, Global Research, 3 July 2008. For ungrounded speculation that completely misunderstands the relations of US and Iraqi troops and ignores the internal politics of Basra, try "Petraeus hid Maliki's resistance to US troops", Gareth Porter, *Asia Times*, 19 April 2008. The idea that the Iraqi army could act independently reached farce when it was reported that the US was having to rely on spy satellites to keep tabs on its whereabouts (U.S. spies on Iraqi army, sources say", Greg Miller, *Los Angeles Times*, July 2, 2008).

[75] As former CIA analyst Ray McGovern highlights, with so many embedded US troops within the Iraqi army, it is simply impossible that the Knights Assault could have been undertaken without US consent ("Ex-CIA analyst on Petraeus and Cheney", *The Real News Network*, 11 April 2008).

[76] "Transcript: Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki on Iraq", *CNN*, 7 April 2008

[77] "Basra Strike Against Shiite Militias Also About Oil", Sam Dagher, *The Christian Science Monitor*, 9 April 2008

[78] "Militias finished in Iraq's Basra: governor", Ian Simpson, *Reuters*, 8 July 2008

[79] For instance, in February Michael Wareing, who heads the Basra Development Commission, stated, 'My sense is that many of the oil companies are very easer to come in now, and what they're actually waiting for is the hydrocarbon law to be passed and various projects to be signed off', ("Oil giants are poised to move into Basra", David Smith, *The Observer*, 24 Febrauary 2008). See also "Deals With Iraq Are Set to Bring Oil Giants Back", Andrew E. Kramer, *The New York Times*, 19 June 2008.

[80] *Where is Iraq Heading? Lessons from Basra*, Crisis Group Middle East Report No 67, 25 June 2007, p7. It is also interesting to note that as a state of emergency imposed by the central government with its checkpoints and curfews ended in Basra in July 2006, Sunni families reported a wave of new leaflets warning them to flee ("In Basra, state of emergency provides little relief form violence", Nancy A Youssef, *McClatchy Newspapers*, 4 July 2006).

[81] "A 'quagmire' as violence upsets efforts to reconstitute Iraqi police forces", Michael Moss, *The New York Times*, 24 May 2006

[82] See *Gangs and Counter Gangs* and *Low Intensity Operations*

[83] *The Guardian*, 14 June 2002

[84] "'For God and Ulster': The Culture of Terror and Loyalist Death Squads in Northern Ireland", Jeffrey A Sluka. In *Death Squad: The Anthropology of State Terror*, Jeffrey A Sluka ed., University of Pennsylvania Press, 2000

[85] "Top secret army cell breaks terrorists", Sean Rayment, *Sunday Telegraph*, 5 February 2007

[86] "'For God and Ulster': The Culture of Terror and Loyalist Death Squads in Northern Ireland", Jeffrey A Sluka, p135

[87] "Fury as Basra troops appear in pro-UVF magazine", Henry McDonald, *The Observer*, September 9 2007

- **State-Sponsored Terror: British and American Black Ops in Iraq (25 June 2008)**

By Andrew G. Marshall
Global Research, June 25, 2008

Shining Light on the "Black World"

In January of 2002, the *Washington Post* ran a story detailing a CIA plan put forward to President Bush shortly after 9/11 by CIA Director George Tenet titled, "Worldwide Attack Matrix," which was "outlining a clandestine anti-terror campaign in 80 countries around the world. What he was ready to propose represented a striking and risky departure for U.S. policy and would give the CIA the broadest and most lethal authority in its history." The plan entailed CIA and Special Forces "covert operations across the globe," and at "the heart of the proposal was a recommendation that the president give the CIA what Tenet labeled "exceptional authorities" to attack and destroy al Qaeda in Afghanistan and the rest of the world." Tenet cited the need for such authority "to allow the agency to operate without restraint -- and he wanted encouragement from the president to take risks." Among the many authorities recommended was the use of "deadly force."

Further, "Another proposal was that the CIA increase liaison work with key foreign intelligence services," as "Using such intelligence services as surrogates could triple or quadruple the CIA's effectiveness." The Worldwide Attack Matrix "described covert operations in 80 countries that were either underway or that he was now recommending. The actions ranged from routine propaganda to lethal covert action in preparation for military attacks," as well as "In some countries, CIA teams would break into facilities to obtain information."[1]

P2OG: "Commit terror, to incite terror... in order to react to terror"

In 2002, the Pentagon's Defense Science Board (DSB) conducted a "Summer Study on Special Operations and Joint Forces in Support of Countering Terrorism," portions of which were leaked to the Federation of American Scientists. According to the document, the "War on Terror" constitutes a "committed, resourceful and globally dispersed adversary with strategic reach," which will require the US to engage in a "long, at times violent, and borderless war." As the *Asia Times* described it, this document lays out a blueprint for the US to "fight fire with fire." Many of the "proposals appear to push the military into territory that traditionally has been the domain of the CIA, raising questions about whether such missions would be subject to the same legal restraints imposed on CIA activities." According to the Chairman of the DSB, "The CIA executes the plans but they use Department of Defense assets."

Specifically, the plan "recommends the creation of a super-Intelligence Support Activity, an organization it dubs the Proactive, Preemptive Operations Group (P2OG), to bring together CIA and military covert action, information warfare, intelligence and cover and deception. For example, the Pentagon and CIA would work together to increase human intelligence (HUMINT) forward/operational presence and to deploy new clandestine technical capabilities." The purpose of P2OG would be in "'stimulating reactions' among terrorists and states possessing weapons of mass destruction, meaning it would prod terrorist cells into action, thus exposing them to 'quick-response' attacks by US forces."[2] In other words, commit terror to incite terror, in order to react to terror.

The *Los Angeles Times* reported in 2002 that, "The Defense Department is building up an elite secret army with resources stretching across the full spectrum of covert capabilities. New organizations are being created. The missions of existing units are being revised," and quoted then-Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld as saying, "Prevention and preemption are ... the only defense against terrorism."[3] Chris Floyd bluntly described P2OG in *CounterPunch*, saying, "the United States government is planning to use "cover and deception" and secret military operations to provoke murderous terrorist attacks on innocent people. Let's say it again: Donald Rumsfeld, Dick Cheney, George W. Bush and the other members of the unelected regime in Washington plan to deliberately foment the murder of innocent people--your family, your friends, your lovers, you--in order to further their geopolitical ambitions."[4]

"The Troubles" with Iraq

On February 5, 2007, the *Telegraph* reported that, "Deep inside the heart of the "Green Zone" [in Iraq], the heavily fortified administrative compound in Baghdad, lies one of the most carefully guarded secrets of the war in Iraq. It is a cell from a small and anonymous British Army unit that goes by the deliberately meaningless name of the Joint Support Group (JSG)." The members of the JSG "are trained to turn hardened terrorists into coalition spies using methods developed on the mean streets of Ulster during the Troubles, when the Army managed to infiltrate the IRA at almost every level. Since

war broke out in Iraq in 2003, they have been responsible for running dozens of Iraqi double agents." They have been "[w]orking alongside the Special Air Service [SAS] and the American Delta Force as part of the Baghdad-based counter-terrorist unit known as Task Force Black."

It was reported that, "During the Troubles [in Northern Ireland], the JSG operated under the cover name of the Force Research Unit (FRU), which between the early 1980s and the late 1990s managed to penetrate the very heart of the IRA. By targeting and then "turning" members of the paramilitary organisation with a variety of "inducements" ranging from blackmail to bribes, the FRU operators developed agents at virtually every command level within the IRA." Further, "The unit was renamed following the Stevens Inquiry into allegations of collusion between the security forces and protestant paramilitary groups, and, until relatively recently continued to work exclusively in Northern Ireland."[5]

Considering that this group had been renamed after revelations of collusion with terrorists, perhaps it is important to take a look at what exactly this "collusion" consisted of. The Stevens Inquiry's report "contains devastating confirmation that intelligence officers of the British police and the military actively helped Protestant guerillas to identify and kill Catholic activists in Northern Ireland during the 1980s." It was, "a state policy sanctioned at the highest level." The Inquiry, "highlighted collusion, the willful failure to keep records, the absence of accountability, the withholding of intelligence, and the extreme of agents being involved in murder," and acknowledged "that innocent people had died because of the collusion." These particular "charges relate to activities of a British Army intelligence outfit known as the Force Research Unit (FRU) and former Royal Ulster Constabulary (RUC) police officers."[6]

In 2002, the *Sunday Herald* reported on the allegations made by a former British intelligence agent, Kevin Fulton, who stated that, "he was told by his military handlers that his collusion with paramilitaries was sanctioned by Margaret Thatcher herself." Fulton worked for the Force Research Unit (FRU), and had infiltrated the IRA, always while on the pay roll of the military. Fulton tells of how in 1992, he told his FRU and MI5 intelligence handlers that his IRA superior was planning to launch a mortar attack on the police, yet his handlers did nothing and the attack went forward, killing a policewoman. Fulton stated, "I broke the law seven days a week and my handlers knew that. They knew that I was making bombs and giving them to other members of the IRA and they did nothing about it. If everything I touched turned to shit then I would have been dead. The idea was that the only way to beat the enemy was to penetrate the enemy and be the enemy."[7]

In 1998, Northern Ireland experienced its "worst single terrorist atrocity," as described by the *BBC*, in which a car bomb went off, killing 29 people and injuring 300.[8] According to a *Sunday Herald* piece in 2001, "Security forces didn't intercept the Real IRA's Omagh bombing team because one of the terrorists was a British double-agent whose cover would have been blown as an informer if the

operation was uncovered." Kevin Fulton had even "phoned a warning to his RUC handlers 48 hours before the Omagh bombing that the Real IRA was planning an attack and gave details of one of the bombing team and his car registration." Further, "The man thought to be the agent is a senior member of the [IRA] organization."[9]

In 2002, it was revealed that, "one of the most feared men inside the Provisional IRA," John Joe Magee, head of the IRA's "internal security unit," commonly known as the IRA's "torturer- in-chief," was actually "one of the UK's most elite soldiers," who "was trained as a member of Britain's special forces." The *Sunday Herald* stated that, "Magee led the IRA's internal security unit for more than a decade up to the mid-90s - most of those he investigated were usually executed," and that, "Magee's unit was tasked to hunt down, interrogate and execute suspected British agents within the IRA."[10]

In 2006, the *Guardian* reported that, "two British agents were central to the bombings of three army border installations in 1990." The claims included tactics known as the 'human bomb', which "involved forcing civilians to drive vehicles laden with explosives into army checkpoints." This tactic "was the brainchild of British intelligence."[11]

In 2006, it was also revealed that, "A former British Army mole in the IRA has claimed that MI5 arranged a weapons-buying trip to America in which he obtained detonators, later used by terrorists to murder soldiers and police officers," and "British intelligence co-operated with the FBI to ensure his trip to New York in the 1990s went ahead without incident so that his cover would not be blown." Further, "the technology he obtained has been used in Northern Ireland and copied by terrorists in Iraq in roadside bombs that have killed British troops."[12]

Considering all these revelations of British collusion with IRA terrorists and complicity in terrorist acts in Northern Ireland through the FRU, what evidence is there that these same tactics are not being deployed in Iraq under the renamed Joint Support Group (JSG)? The recruits to the JSG in Iraq are trained extensively and those "who eventually pass the course can expect to be posted to Baghdad, Basra and Afghanistan."[13]

P2OG in Action

In September of 2003, months after the initial invasion of Iraq in March 2003, Iraq's most sacred Shiite mosque was blown up, killing between 80 and 120 people, including a popular Shiite cleric, and the event was blamed by Iraqis on the American forces.[14]

On April 20, 2004, American journalist in Iraq, Dahr Jamail, reported in the *New Standard* that, "The word on the street in Baghdad is that the cessation of suicide car bombings is proof that the CIA was behind them." Jamail interviewed a doctor who stated that, "The U.S. induces aggression. If you don't attack me, I will never attack you. The U.S. is stimulating the aggression of the Iraqi people!" This

description goes very much in line with the aims outlined in the Pentagon's P2OG document about "inciting terror," or "preempting terror attacks."[15]

Weeks after the initial incident involving the British SAS soldiers in Basra, in October of 2005, it was reported that Americans were "captured in the act of setting off a car bomb in Baghdad," as, "A number of Iraqis apprehended two Americans disguised in Arab dress as they tried to blow up a booby-trapped car in the middle of a residential area in western Baghdad on Tuesday. ... Residents of western Baghdad's al-Ghazaliyah district [said] the people had apprehended the Americans as they left their Caprice car near a residential neighborhood in al-Ghazaliyah on Tuesday afternoon. Local people found they looked suspicious so they detained the men before they could get away. That was when they discovered that they were Americans and called the ... police." However, "the Iraq police arrived at approximately the same time as allied military forces - and the two men were removed from Iraq custody and whisked away before any questioning could take place."[16]

It was reported that in May of 2005, an Iraqi man was arrested after witnessing a car bombing that took place in front of his home, as it was said he shot an Iraqi National Guardsman. However, "People from the area claim that the man was taken away not because he shot anyone, but because he knew too much about the bomb. Rumor has it that he saw an American patrol passing through the area and pausing at the bomb site minutes before the explosion. Soon after they drove away, the bomb went off and chaos ensued. He ran out of his house screaming to the neighbors and bystanders that the Americans had either planted the bomb or seen the bomb and done nothing about it. He was promptly taken away."

Further, another story was reported in the same month that took place in Baghdad when an Iraqi driver had his license and car confiscated at a checkpoint, after which he was instructed "to report to an American military camp near Baghdad airport for interrogation and in order to retrieve his license." After being questioned for a short while, he was told to drive his car to an Iraqi police station, where his license had been forwarded, and that he should go quickly. "The driver did leave in a hurry, but was soon alarmed with a feeling that his car was driving as if carrying a heavy load, and he also became suspicious of a low flying helicopter that kept hovering overhead, as if trailing him. He stopped the car and inspected it carefully. He found nearly 100 kilograms of explosives hidden in the back seat and along the two back doors. The only feasible explanation for this incident is that the car was indeed booby trapped by the Americans and intended for the al-Khadimiya Shiite district of Baghdad. The helicopter was monitoring his movement and witnessing the anticipated 'hideous attack by foreign elements."[17]

On October 4, 2005, it was reported by the *Sydney Morning Herald* that, "The FBI's counterterrorism unit has launched a broad investigation of US-based theft rings after discovering some vehicles used in deadly car bombings in Iraq, including attacks that killed US troops and Iraqi civilians, were probably

stolen in the United States, according to senior US Government officials." Further, "The inquiry began after coalition troops raided a Falluja bomb factory last November and found a Texas-registered four-wheel-drive being prepared for a bombing mission. Investigators said there were several other cases where vehicles evidently stolen in the US wound up in Syria or other Middle Eastern countries and ultimately in the hands of Iraqi insurgent groups, including al-Qaeda in Iraq."[18]

In 2006, the Al-Askariya mosque in the city of Samarra was bombed and destroyed. It was built in 944, was over 1,000 years old, and was one of the most important Shi'ite mosques in the world. The great golden dome that covered it, which was built in 1904, was destroyed in the 2006 bombing, which was set off by men dressed as Iraqi Special Forces.[19] Former 27-year CIA analyst who gave several presidents their daily CIA briefings, Ray McGovern, stated that he "does not rule out Western involvement in this week's Askariya mosque bombing." He was quoted as saying, "The main question is Qui Bono? Who benefits from this kind of thing? You don't have to be very conspiratorial or even paranoid to suggest that there are a whole bunch of likely suspects out there and not only the Sunnis. You know, the British officers were arrested, dressed up in Arab garb, riding around in a car, so this stuff goes on."[20]

Death Squads for "Freedom"

In January of 2005, *Newsweek* reported on a Pentagon program termed the "Salvador Option" being discussed to be deployed in Iraq. This strategy "dates back to a still-secret strategy in the Reagan administration's battle against the leftist guerrilla insurgency in El Salvador in the early 1980s. Then, faced with a losing war against Salvadoran rebels, the U.S. government funded or supported "nationalist" forces that allegedly included so-called death squads directed to hunt down and kill rebel leaders and sympathizers." Updating the strategy to Iraq, "one Pentagon proposal would send Special Forces teams to advise, support and possibly train Iraqi squads, most likely hand-picked Kurdish Peshmerga fighters and Shiite militiamen, to target Sunni insurgents and their sympathizers, even across the border into Syria, according to military insiders familiar with the discussions."[21]

The *Times* reported that, "the Pentagon is considering forming hit squads of Kurdish and Shia fighters to target leaders of the Iraqi insurgency in a strategic shift borrowed from the American struggle against left-wing guerrillas in Central America 20 years ago. Under the so-called 'El Salvador option', Iraqi and American forces would be sent to kill or kidnap insurgency leaders." It further stated, "Hit squads would be controversial and would probably be kept secret," as "The experience of the so-called "death squads" in Central America remains raw for many even now and helped to sully the image of the United States in the region." Further, "John Negroponte, the US Ambassador in Baghdad, had a front-row seat at the time as Ambassador to Honduras from 1981-85."[22]

By June of 2005, mass executions were taking place in Iraq in the six months since January, and, "What is particularly striking is that many of those killings have taken place since the Police Commandos became operationally active and often correspond with areas where they have been deployed."[23]

In May of 2007, an Iraqi who formerly collaborated with US forces in Iraq for two and a half years stated that, "I was a soldier in the Iraqi army in the war of 1991 and during the withdrawal from Kuwait I decided to seek asylum in Saudi Arabia along with dozens of others like me. That was how began the process whereby I was recruited into the American forces, for there were US military committees that chose a number of Iraqis who were willing to volunteer to join them and be transported to America. I was one of those." He spoke out about how after the 2003 invasion, he was returned to Iraq to "carry out specific tasks assigned him by the US agencies." Among those tasks, he was put "in charge of a group of a unit that carried out assassinations in the streets of Baghdad."

He was quoted as saying, "Our task was to carry out assassinations of individuals. The US occupation army would supply us with their names, pictures, and maps of their daily movements to and from their place of residence and we were supposed to kill the Shi'i, for example, in the al-A'zamiyah, and kill the Sunni in the of 'Madinat as-Sadr', and so on." Further, "Anyone in the unit who made a mistake was killed. Three members of my team were killed by US occupation forces after they failed to assassinate Sunni political figures in Baghdad." He revealed that this "dirty jobs" unit of Iraqis, Americans and other foreigners, "doesn't only carry out assassinations, but some of them specialize in planting bombs and car bombs in neighborhoods and markets."

He elaborated in saying that "operations of planting car bombs and blowing up explosives in markets are carried out in various ways, the best-known and most famous among the US troops is placing a bomb inside cars as they are being searched at checkpoints. Another way is to put bombs in the cars during interrogations. After the desired person is summoned to one of the US bases, a bomb is place in his car and he is asked to drive to a police station or a market for some purpose and there his car blows up."[24]

Divide and Conquer?

Craig Murray, former British Ambassador to Uzbekistan, wrote in October of 2006, that, "The evidence that the US directly contributed to the creation of the current civil war in Iraq by its own secretive security strategy is compelling. Historically of course this is nothing new - divide and rule is a strategy for colonial powers that has stood the test of time. Indeed, it was used in the previous British occupation of Iraq around 85 years ago. However, maybe in the current scenario the US just over did it a bit, creating an unstoppable momentum that, while stalling the insurgency, has actually led to new problems of control and sustainability for Washington and London."[25]

Andrew G. Marshall *contributed to breaking the Climate Change consensus in a celebrated 2006 article entitled Global Warming A Convenient Lie, in which he challenged the findings underlying Al Gore's documentary. According to Marshall, 'as soon as people start to state that "the debate is over", beware, because the fundamental basis of all sciences is that debate is never over'. Andrew Marshall has also written on the militarization of Central Africa, national security issues and the process of integration of North America. He is also a contributor to GeopoliticalMonitor.com He is currently a researcher at the Centre for Research on Globalization (CRG) in Montreal and is studying political science and history at Simon Fraser University, British Columbia.*

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- **US Special Forces counterinsurgency manual FM 31-20-3 (18 June 2008)**

(Redirected from US Special Forces counter-insurgency manual FM 31-20-3)

By Order of the Secretary of the Army:

GORDON R. SULLIVAN
General, United States Army
Chief of Staff

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Analysis

US Special Forces counterinsurgency manual leaked

Summary

US Army Field Manual FM 31-20-3, *Foreign Internal Defense Tactics Techniques and Procedures for Special Forces*; 2004 edition. Made US Army doctrine (policy) on 20 September 1994; 219 printed pages. Written at the sensitive but unclassified level.

This sensitive US military counterinsurgency manual could be critically described as *"What we learned about running death squads and propping up corrupt government in Latin America and how to apply it to other places"*. Its contents are both history defining for Latin America and, given the continued role of US Special Forces in the suppression of insurgencies and guerilla movements world wide, history making.

The document, which is official US Special Forces policy, directly advocates training paramilitaries, pervasive surveillance, censorship, press control, restrictions on labor unions & political parties, suspending *habeas corpus*, warrantless searches, detainment without charge, bribery, employing terrorists, false flag operations, concealing human rights abuses from journalists, and extensive use of "psychological operations" (propaganda) to make these and other "population & resource control" measures palatable.

Verified by Wikileaks editorial board. Since the manual is US Army doctrine there are also public references to the title and tables of content elsewhere.

The 1994 version of this document is available, perhaps by mistake, on the Leaven Worth Army site: http://calldp.leavenworth.army.mil/mhi/20050510071323 63/31_20_3.pdf

The 2007 version of this document (renamed to FM 3-05.202, Special Forces Foreign Internal Defense Operations): http://www.army.mil/usapa/doctrine/31_Series_Collection_1.html (needs US Army username/password for access). Of additional interest is TC 31-73 SPECIAL FORCES ADVISOR GUIDE (2008, also restricted).

Selected extracts follow. Note that the manual is 219 pages and contains substantial material throughout. These extracts should merely be considered representative. Emphasis by Wikileaks.

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[...]

Insurgent Strategies.

There are three general strategies of insurgency: foco, mass-oriented, and traditional.

Foco Insurgency.

A foco (Spanish word meaning focus or focal point) is a single, armed cell that emerges from hidden strongholds in an atmosphere of disintegrating legitimacy. In theory, this cell is the nucleus around which mass popular support rallies. The insurgents build new institutions and establish control on the basis of that support. For a foco insurgency to succeed, government legitimacy must be near total collapse. Timing is critical. The foco must mature at the same time the government loses legitimacy and before any alternative appears. The most famous foco insurgencies were those led by Castro and Che Guevara. The strategy was quite effective in Cuba because the Batista regime was corrupt and incompetent. The distinguishing characteristics of a foco insurgency are The deliberate avoidance of preparatory organizational work. The rationale is based on the premise that most peasants are

intimidated by the authorities and will betray any group that cannot defend itself. The development of rural support as demonstrated by the ability of the foco insurgency to strike against the authorities and survive. The absence of any emphasis on the protracted nature of the conflict.

Fidel Castro/Cuba

In 1952, Fidel Castro began his revolutionary movement in Cuba. After an unsuccessful attack of Ft. Moncada, he was imprisoned. Upon release in 1955 he fled to Mexico to train a new group of guerrilla warriors. In 1956, Castro and 82 of his followers returned to Cuba on a yacht. Of this group, only 12 of Castro's followers made their way to the Sierra Maestra mountains. From his remote mountain base, he established a 100to 150-man nucleus. As Castro's organization grew, small unit patrols began hit-and-run type operations. While Castro continued to expand his area of influence, the popularity of the corrupt Batista government waned. In May of 1958, the government launched an attack on the Sierra Maestra stronghold. Castro withdrew deeper into the mountains, while spreading his message on national reform. Batista's continuing repression of the country led to general strikes and continuing growth in popular support for Castro's small cell of revolutionaries. Finally, Batista fled the country on 1 January 1959, and Castro established a junta and became the Prime Minister and President.

Mass-Oriented Insurgency

This insurgency aims to achieve the political and armed mobilization of a large popular movement. Mass-oriented insurgencies emphasize creating apolitical and armed legitimacy outside the existing system. They challenge that system and then destroy or supplant it. These insurgents patiently build a large armed force of regular and irregular guerrillas. They also construct a base of active and passive political supporters. They plan a protracted campaign of increasing violence to destroy the government and its institutions from the outside, Their political leadership normally is distinct from their military leadership. Their movement normally establishes a parallel government that openly proclaims its own legitimacy. They have a well-developed ideology and decide on their objectives only after careful analysis. Highly organized, they mobilize forces for a direct military and political challenge to the government using propaganda and guerrilla action. The distinguishing characteristics of a mass-oriented insurgency are:

Political control by the revolutionary organization, which assures priority of political considerations. Reliance on organized popular support to provide recruits, funds, supplies, and intelligence. Primary areas of activity, especially in early phases, in the remote countryside where the population can be organized and base areas established with little interference from the authorities. Reliance upon guerrilla tactics to carry on the military side of the strategy. These tactics focus on the avoidance of battle, except at times and places of the insurgents choosing, and the employment of stealth and secrecy, ambush, and surprise to overcome the initial imbalance of strength. A phased strategy

consisting first of a primarily organizational phase in which the population is prepared for its vital role. In the second phase, armed struggle is launched and the guerrilla force gradually builds up in size and strength, The third phase consists of mobile, more conventional warfare. Conceptually, this third phase is accompanied by a popular uprising that helps overwhelm the regime. It is a concept of protracted war.

Vietnam Conflict.

The Vietnam conflict (1959-1975) is one example of a mass-oriented insurgency. In December 1960, under the leadership of Ho Chi Minh, the National Liberation Front was formed in North Vietnam. Its main goal was to establish shadow governments at all levels in South Vietnam to take control of the population from the South Vietnamese. The National Liberation Front also used propaganda and guerrilla action, expecting the South Vietnamese population to rally to their side and overthrow the government. The insurgency was actually a failure because the mass uprising of the population, envisioned by the communist leaders, never occurred. Relentless guerrilla attacks did serve to weaken the government of South Vietnam, but they did not cause it to fall. In the spring of 1975, North Vietnam launched a massive conventional invasion of South Vietnam using armored vehicles. Saigon, the capital city, fell on 30 April.

Traditional Insurgency.

This insurgency normally grows from very specific grievances and initially has limited aims. It springs from tribal, racial, religious, linguistic, or other similarly identifiable groups. The insurgents perceive that the government has denied the rights and interests of their group and work to establish or restore them. They frequently seek withdrawal from government control through autonomy or semiautonomy. They seldom specifically seek to overthrow the government or control the whole society. They generally respond in kind to government violence. Their use of violence can range from strikes and street demonstrations to terrorism and guerrilla warfare. These insurgencies may cease if the government accedes to the insurgents demands. The concessions the insurgents demand, however, are so great that the government concedes its legitimacy along with them.

Huk Rebellion.

The Huk rebellion in the Philippines can be considered a traditional insurgency despite its Communist origin. The Huks first surfaced as an armed force resisting the Japanese occupation of the Second World War. After the war, when other resistance bands disarmed, the Huks did not. After the American liberation, the Huks saw a chance to seize national power at a time when the newly proclaimed Philippine Republic was in obvious distress as a result of a monetary crisis, graft in high office, and mounting peasant unrest. By 1950, the Huks had built a force of 12,800 armed guerrillas

with thousands of peasant supporters on central Luzon. They were defeated in a series of actions by the Armed Forces of the Philippines led by Ramon Magsaysa. By 1965, they were nearly extinct, down to 75 members. Largely agrarian, the Huks do not view the government as totally in need of replacement but believe that many of the people in it need to be replaced. Recently the Huk movement has been gaining popular support, once again on the island of Luzon.

[...]

Counterintelligence

[...]

Most of the counterintelligence measures used will be overt in nature and aimed at protecting installations, units, and information and detecting espionage, sabotage, and subversion. **Examples of counterintelligence measures to use are**

Background investigations and records checks of persons in sensitive positions and persons whose loyalty may be questionable.

Maintenance of files on organizations, locations, and individuals of counterintelligence interest.

Internal security inspections of installations and units.

Control of civilian movement within government-controlled areas.

Identification systems to minimize the chance of insurgents gaining access to installations or moving freely.

Unannounced searches and raids on suspected meeting places.

Censorship.

[...]

PSYOP [**Psychological Operations**] are essential to the success of PRC [**Population & Resources Control**]. For maximum effectiveness, a strong psychological operations effort is directed toward the families of the insurgents and their popular support base. **The PSYOP aspect of the PRC program tries to make the imposition of control more palatable** to the people by relating the necessity of controls to their safety and well-being. PSYOP efforts also try to create a favorable national or local government image and counter the effects of the insurgent propaganda effort.

Control Measures

SF [US Special Forces] can advise and assist HN [Host Nation] forces in developing and implementing control measures. Among these measures are the following:

> Security Forces. Police and other security forces use PRC [Population & Resources Control] measures to deprive the insurgent of support and to identify and locate members of his infrastructure. Appropriate PSYOP [Psychological Operations] help make these measures more acceptable to the population by explaining their need. The government informs the population that the PRC measures may cause an inconvenience but are necessary due to the actions of the insurgents.
>
> Restrictions. **Rights on the legality of detention or imprisonment of personnel (for example, habeas corpus) may be temporarily suspended**. This measure must be taken as a last resort, since it may provide the insurgents with an effective propaganda theme. PRC [Population & Resources Control] measures can also include curfews or blackouts, travel restrictions, and restricted residential areas such as protected villages or resettlement areas. Registration and pass systems and control of sensitive items (resources control) and critical supplies such as weapons, food, and fuel are other PRC measures. Checkpoints, searches, roadblocks; **surveillance, censorship, and press control**; and **restriction of activity that applies to selected groups (labor unions, political groups and the like) are further PRC measures**.

[...]

Legal Considerations. All restrictions, controls, and DA measures must be governed by the legality of these methods and their impact on the populace. In countries where government authorities do not have wide latitude in controlling the population, special or emergency legislation must be enacted. **This emergency legislation may include a form of martial law permitting government forces to search without warrant, to detain without bringing formal charges, and to execute other similar actions.**

[...]

Psychological Operations

PSYOP can support the mission by discrediting the insurgent forces to neutral groups, creating dissension among the insurgents themselves, and supporting defector programs. **Divisive programs create dissension, disorganization, low morale, subversion, and defection within the insurgent forces.** Also important are national programs to win insurgents over to the government side with offers of amnesty and rewards. Motives for surrendering can range from personal rivalries

and bitterness to disillusionment and discouragement. **Pressure from the security forces has persuasive power.**

[...]

Intelligence personnel must consider the parameters within which a revolutionary movement operates. Frequently, they establish a centralized intelligence processing center to collect and coordinate the amount of information required to make long-range intelligence estimates. Long-range intelligence focuses on the stable factors existing in an insurgency. For example, various demographic factors (ethnic, racial, social, economic, religious, and political characteristics of the area in which the underground movement takes places) are useful in identifying the members of the underground. Information about the underground organization at national, district, and local level is basic in FID [Foreign Internal Defense] and/or IDAD operations. Collection of specific short-range intelligence about the rapidly changing variables of a local situation is critical. **Intelligence personnel must gather information on members of the underground, their movements, and their methods. Biographies and photos of suspected underground members, detailed information on their homes, families, education, work history, and associates are important features of short-range intelligence.**

Destroying its tactical units is not enough to defeat the enemy. The insurgent's underground cells or infrastructure must be neutralized first because the infrastructure is his main source of tactical intelligence and political control. **Eliminating the infrastructure within an area** achieves two goals: it ensures the government's control of the area, and it cuts off the enemy's main source of intelligence. An intelligence and operations command center (IOCC) is needed at district or province level. This organization becomes the nerve center for operations against the insurgent infrastructure. Information on insurgent infrastructure targets should come from such sources as the national police and other established intelligence nets and agents and individuals (informants).

The highly specialized and sensitive nature of clandestine intelligence collection demands specially selected and highly trained agents. Information from clandestine sources is often highly sensitive and requires tight control to protect the source. However, tactical information upon which a combat response can be taken should be passed to the appropriate tactical level.

The spotting, assessment, and recruitment of an agent is not a haphazard process regardless of the type agent being sought. During the assessment phase, the case officer determines the individual's degree of intelligence, access to target, available or necessary cover, and motivation. He initiates the recruitment and coding action only after he determines the individual has the necessary attributes to fulfill the needs.

All agents are closely observed and those that are not reliable are relieved. A few well-targeted, reliable agents are better and more economical than a large number of poor ones.

A system is needed to evaluate the agents and the information they submit. The maintenance of an agent master dossier (possibly at the SFOD B level) can be useful in evaluating the agent on the value and quality of information he has submitted. The dossier must contain a copy of the agent's source data report and every intelligence report he submitted.

Security forces can induce individuals among the general populace to become informants. **Security forces use various motives (civic-mindedness, patriotism, fear, punishment avoidance, gratitude, revenge or jealousy, financial rewards) as persuasive arguments**. They use the assurance of protection from reprisal as a major inducement. Security forces must maintain the informant's anonymity and must conceal the transfer of information from the source to the security agent. The security agent and the informant may prearrange signals to coincide with everyday behavior.

Surveillance, the covert observation of persons and places, is a principal method of gaining and confirming intelligence information. Surveillance techniques naturally vary with the requirements of different situations. The basic procedures include mechanical observation (wiretaps or concealed microphones), observation from fixed locations, and physical surveillance of subjects.

Whenever a suspect is apprehended during an operation, a hasty interrogation takes place to gain immediate information that could be of tactical value. The most frequently used methods for gathering information (map studies and aerial observation), however, are normally unsuccessful. Most PWs cannot read a map. When they are taken on a visual reconnaissance flight, it is usually their first flight and they cannot associate an aerial view with what they saw on the ground.

The most successful interrogation method consists of a map study based on terrain information received from the detainee. The interrogator first asks the detainee what the sun's direction was when he left the base camp. From this information, he can determine a general direction. The interrogator then asks the detainee how long it took him to walk to the point where he was captured. Judging the terrain and the detainee's health, the interrogator can determine a general radius in which the base camp can be found (he can use an overlay for this purpose). He then asks the detainee to identify significant terrain features he saw on each day of his journey, (rivers, open areas, hills, rice paddies, swamps). As the detainee speaks and his memory is jogged, the interrogator finds these terrain features on a current map and gradually plots the detainee's route to finally locate the base camp.

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Political Structures. A tightly disciplined party organization, formally structured to parallel the existing government hierarchy, may be found at the center of some insurgent movements. In most instances, this organizational structure will consist of committed organizations at the village, district province, and national levels. Within major divisions and sections of an insurgent military headquarters, totally distinct but parallel command channels exist. There are military chains of command and political channels of control. The party ensures complete domination over the military structure using its own parallel organization. It dominates through a political division in an insurgent military headquarters, a party cell or group in an insurgent military unit, or a political military officer.

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Responsiveness and speedy payment are essential in this process since the widow normally does not have a means of support and the psychological effect of the government assisting her in her time of grief impacts on the entire community. These and other benefits offered by or through the HN government are valuable incentives for recruiting and sustaining the CSDF.

[...]

The local CSDF members select their leaders and deputy leaders (CSDF groups and teams) in elections organized by the local authorities. In some cases, the HN [Host Nation] appoints a leader who is a specially selected member of the HN security forces trained to carry out this task. **Such appointments occurred in El Salvador where the armed forces have established a formal**

school to train CSDF commanders. Extreme care and close supervision are required to avoid abuses by CSDF leaders.

[...]

The organization of a CSDF can be similar to that of a combat group. This organization is effective in both rural and urban settings. **For example, a basic group, having a strength of 107 members, is broken down into three 35-man elements plus a headquarters element of 2 personnel. Each 35-man element is further broken down into three 1 l-man teams and a headquarters element of 2 personnel. Each team consists of a team leader, an assistant team leader, and three 3-man cells. This organization can be modified to accommodate the number of citizens available to serve.**

[...]

Weapons training for the CSDF personnel is critical. Skill at arms decides the outcome of battle and must be stressed. Of equal importance is the maintenance and care of weapons. CSDF members are taught basic rifle marksmanship with special emphasis on firing from fixed positions and during conditions of limited visibility. Also included in the marksmanship training program are target detection and fire discipline.

Training ammunition is usually allocated to the CSDF on the basis of a specified number of rounds for each authorized weapon. A supporting HN government force or an established CSDF logistic source provides the ammunition to support refresher training.

[...]

Acts of misconduct by HN [Host Nation] personnel

All members of training assistance teams must understand their responsibilities concerning acts of misconduct by HN personnel. Team members receive briefings before deployment on what to do if they encounter or observe such acts. Common Article 3 of the four Geneva Conventions lists prohibited acts by parties to the convention. Such acts are-

Violence to life and person, in particular, murder, mutilation, cruel treatment, and torture.

Taking of hostages.

Outrages against personal dignity, in particular, humiliating and degrading treatment.

Passing out sentences and carrying out executions without previous judgment by a regularly constituted court that affords all the official guarantees that are recog-nized as indispensable by civilized people.

The provisions in the above paragraph represent a level of conduct that the United States expects each foreign country to observe.

If team members encounter prohibited acts they can not stop, they will disengage from the activity, leave the area if possible, and report the incidents immediately to the proper in-country U.S. authorities. The country team will identify proper U.S. authorities during the team's initial briefing. **Team members will not discuss such matters with non-U.S. Government authorities such as journalists and civilian contractors.**

[...]

Most insurgents' doctrinal and training documents stress the use of pressure-type mines in the more isolated or less populated areas. They prefer using commandtype mines in densely populated areas. These documents stress that when using noncommand-detonated mines, the insurgents use every means to inform the local populace on their location, commensurate with security regulations. In reality, most insurgent groups suffer from various degrees of deficiency in their C2 [Command & Control] systems. Their C2 does not permit them to verify that those elements at the operational level strictly follow directives and orders. In the case of the Frente Farabundo Marti de la Liberation Nacional (FMLN) in El Salvador, the individual that emplaces the mine is responsible for its recovery after the engagement. There are problems with this concept. The individual may be killed or the security forces may gain control of the area. Therefore, the recovery of the mine is next to impossible.

[...]

Homemade antipersonnel mines are used extensively in El Salvador, Guatemala and Malaysia. (Eighty percent of all El Salvadoran armed forces casualties in 1986 were due to mines; in 1987, soldiers wounded by mines and booby traps averaged 50 to 60 per month.) The important point to remember is that any homemade mine is the product of the resources available to the insurgent group. Therefore, no two antipersonnel mines may be the same in their configuration and materials. Insurgent groups depend to a great extent on materials discarded or lost by security forces personnel. The insurgents not only use weapons, ammunition, mines, grenades, and demolitions for their original purpose but also in preparing expedient mines and booby traps.

[...]

A series of successful minings carried out by the Viet Cong insurgents on the Cua Viet River, Quang Tri Province, demonstrated their resourcefulness in countering minesweeping tactics. Initially, chain-dragging sweeps took place morning and evening. After several successful mining attacks, it was apparent that they laid the mines after the minesweepers passed. Then, the boats using the river formed into convoys and transited the river with minesweepers 914 meters ahead oft he convoy.

Nevertheless, boats of the convoy were successfully mined in mid-channel, indicating that the mines were again laid after the minesweeper had passed, possibly by using sampans. Several sampans were observed crossing or otherwise using the channel between the minesweepers and the convoy. The convoys were then organized so that the minesweepers worked immediately ahead of the convoy. One convoy successfully passed. The next convoy had its minesweepers mined and ambushed close to the river banks.

[...]

Military Advisors

[...]

Psychologically pressuring the HN [Host Nation] counterpart may sometimes be successful. Forms of psychological pressure may range from the obvious to the subtle. The advisor never applies direct threats, pressure, or intimidation on his counterpart Indirect psychological pressure may be applied by taking an issue up the chain of command to a higher U.S. commander. The U.S. commander can then bring his counterpart to force the subordinate counterpart to comply. Psychological pressure may obtain quick results but may have very negative side effects. The counterpart will feel alienated and possibly hostile if the advisor uses such techniques. Offers of payment in the form of valuables may cause him to become resentful of the obvious control being exerted over him. In short, psychologically pressuring a counterpart is not recommended. Such pressure is used only as a last resort since it may irreparably damage the relationship between the advisor and his counterpart

PSYOP [Psychological Operations] Support for Military Advisors

The introduction of military advisors requires preparing the populace with which the advisors are going to work. Before advisors enter a country, the HN [Host Nation] government carefully explains their introduction and clearly emphasizes the benefits of their presence to the citizens. It must provide a credible justification to minimize the obvious propaganda benefits the insurgents could derive from this action. The country's dissenting elements label our actions, no matter how well-intended, an "imperialistic intervention."

Once advisors are committed, their activities should be exploited. Their successful integration into the HN [Host Nation] society and their respect for local customs and mores, as well as their involvement with CA [Civil Affairs] projects, are constantly brought to light. In formulating a realistic policy for the use of advisors, the commander must carefully gauge the psychological climate of the HN and the United States.

[...]

PRC [Population & Resources Control] Operations.

Advisors assist their counterparts in developing proper control plans and training programs for PRC measures. They also help coordinate plans and requests for materiel and submit recommendations to improve the overall effectiveness of operations. They can be helpful in preparing to initiate control.

Select, organize, and train paramilitary and irregular forces.

Develop PSYOP [Psychological Operations] activities to support PRC operations.

Coordinate activities through an area coordination center (if established).

Establish and refine PRC operations.

Intensify intelligence activities.

Establish and refine coordination and communications with other agencies.

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- **How to train death squads and quash revolutions from San Salvador to Iraq (15 June 2008)**

McCain's real Petraeus doctrine

(Redirected from How to crush insurgencies from San Salvador to Baghdad)

Wikileaks has obtained the "Petraeus doctrine" the Pentagon didn't want to show you.

JULIAN ASSANGE (investigative editor)

June 16, 2008, updated: October 8, 2008



Nicaraguan civil-war victims, 1978

> *[T]he psychological effectiveness of the CSDF concept starts by reversing the insurgent strategy of making the government the repressor. It forces the insurgents to cross a critical threshold-that of attacking and killing the very class of people they are supposed to be liberating.*
>
> *— US Special Forces doctrine obtained by Wikileaks*

So states the US Special Forces counterinsurgency manual obtained by Wikileaks, *Foreign Internal Defense Tactics Techniques and Procedures for Special Forces* (1994, 2004). The manual may be critically described as *"what the US learned about running death squads and propping up corrupt government in Latin America and how to apply it to other places"*. Its contents are both history defining for Latin America and, given the continued role of US Special Forces in the suppression of insurgencies, including in Iraq and Afghanistan, history making.

The leaked manual, which has been verified with military sources, is the official US Special Forces doctrine for Foreign Internal Defense or FID.

FID operations are designed to prop up "friendly" governments facing popular revolution or guerilla insurgency. FID interventions are often covert or quasi-covert due to the unpopular nature of the governments being supported ("In formulating a realistic policy for the use of advisors, the commander must carefully gauge the psychological climate of the HN [Host Nation] and the United States.")

The manual directly advocates training paramilitaries, pervasive surveillance, censorship, press control and restrictions on labor unions & political parties. It directly advocates warrantless searches, detainment without charge and (under varying circumstances) the suspension of *habeas corpus*. It directly advocates employing terrorists or prosecuting individuals for terrorism who are not terrorists, running false flag operations and concealing human rights abuses from journalists. And it repeatedly advocates the use of subterfuge and *"psychological operations"* (propaganda) to make these and other *"population & resource control"* measures more palatable.

The content has been particularly informed by the long United States involvement in El Salvador.

In 2005 a number of credible media reports suggested the Pentagon was intensely debating "the Salvador option" for Iraq.[1]. According to the New York Times Magazine:

The template for Iraq today is not Vietnam, with which it has often been compared, but El Salvador, where a right-wing government backed by the United States fought a leftist insurgency in a 12-year war beginning in 1980. The cost was high — more than 70,000 people were killed, most of them civilians, in a country with a population of just six million. Most of the killing and torturing was done by the army and the right-wing death squads affiliated with it. According to an Amnesty International report in 2001, violations committed by the army and associated groups included "extrajudicial executions, other unlawful killings, 'disappearances' and torture. . . . Whole villages were targeted by the armed forces and their inhabitants massacred." As part of President Reagan's policy of supporting anti-Communist forces, hundreds of millions of dollars in United States aid was funneled to the Salvadoran Army, and a team of 55 Special Forces advisers, led for several years by Jim Steele, trained front-line battalions that were accused of significant human rights abuses.



US trained "death squad" victims in San Salvador, 1981

The same article states James Steele and many other former Central American Special Forces "military advisors" have now been appointed at a high level to Iraq.

In 1993 a United Nations truth commission on El Salvador, which examined 22,000 atrocities that occurred during the twelve-year civil war, attributed 85 percent of the abuses to the US-backed El Salvador military and its paramilitary death squads.

It is worth noting what the US Ambassador to El Salvador, Robert E. White (now the president for the Center for International Policy) had to say as early as 1980, in State Department documents obtained under the Freedom of Information Act:

The major, immediate threat to the existence of this government is the right-wing violence. In the city of San Salvador, the hired thugs of the extreme right, some of them well-trained Cuban and Nicaraguan terrorists, kill moderate left leaders and blow up government buildings. In the countryside, elements of the security forces torture and kill the campesinos, shoot up their houses and burn their crops. At least two hundred refugees from the countryside arrive daily in the capital city. This campaign of terror is radicalizing the rural areas just as surely as Somoza's National Guard did in Nicaragua. Unfortunately, the command structure of the army and the security forces either tolerates or encourages this activity. These senior officers believe or pretend to believe that they are eliminating the guerillas.[2]

Selected extracts follow. Note that the manual is 219 pages long and contains substantial material throughout. These extracts should merely be considered representative. **Emphasis** has been added for further selectivity. The full manual can be found at US Special Forces counterinsurgency manual FM 31-20-3.

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Destruction Notice: Destroy by any method that must prevent disclosure of contents or reconstruction of the document.

[...]

Counterintelligence

[...]

Most of the counterintelligence measures used will be overt in nature and aimed at protecting installations, units, and information and detecting espionage, sabotage, and subversion. **Examples of counterintelligence measures to use are**

Background investigations and records checks of persons in sensitive positions and persons whose loyalty may be questionable.

Maintenance of files on organizations, locations, and individuals of counterintelligence interest.

Internal security inspections of installations and units.

Control of civilian movement within government-controlled areas.

Identification systems to minimize the chance of insurgents gaining access to installations or moving freely.

Unannounced searches and raids on suspected meeting places.

Censorship.

[...]

PSYOP [**Psychological Operations**] are essential to the success of PRC [**Population & Resources Control**]. For maximum effectiveness, a strong psychological operations effort is directed toward the families of the insurgents and their popular support base. **The PSYOP aspect of the PRC program tries to make the imposition of control more palatable** to the people by relating the necessity of controls to their safety and well-being. PSYOP efforts also try to create a favorable national or local government image and counter the effects of the insurgent propaganda effort.

Control Measures

SF [US Special Forces] can advise and assist HN [Host Nation] forces in developing and implementing control measures. Among these measures are the following:

Security Forces. Police and other security forces use PRC [Population & Resources Control] measures to deprive the insurgent of support and to identify and locate members of his infrastructure. Appropriate PSYOP [Psychological Operations] help make these measures more acceptable to the population by explaining their need. The government informs the population that the PRC measures may cause an inconvenience but are necessary due to the actions of the insurgents.

Restrictions. **Rights on the legality of detention or imprisonment of personnel (for example, habeas corpus) may be temporarily suspended**. This measure must be taken as a last resort, since it may provide the insurgents with an effective propaganda theme. PRC [Population & Resources Control] measures can also include curfews or blackouts, travel restrictions, and restricted residential areas such as protected villages or resettlement areas. Registration and pass systems and control of sensitive items (resources control) and critical supplies such as weapons, food, and fuel are other PRC measures. Checkpoints, searches, roadblocks; **surveillance, censorship, and press control**; and **restriction of activity that applies to selected groups (labor unions, political groups and the like) are further PRC measures**.

[...]

Legal Considerations. All restrictions, controls, and DA measures must be governed by the legality of these methods and their impact on the populace. In countries where government authorities do not have wide latitude in controlling the population, special or emergency legislation must be enacted. **This emergency legislation may include a form of martial law permitting government forces to search without warrant, to detain without bringing formal charges, and to execute other similar actions.**

[...]

Psychological Operations

PSYOP can support the mission by discrediting the insurgent forces to neutral groups, creating dissension among the insurgents themselves, and supporting defector programs. **Divisive programs create dissension, disorganization, low morale, subversion, and defection within the insurgent forces.** Also important are national programs to win insurgents over to the government side with offers of amnesty and rewards. Motives for surrendering can range from personal rivalries and bitterness to disillusionment and discouragement. **Pressure from the security forces has persuasive power.**

[...]

Intelligence personnel must consider the parameters within which a revolutionary movement operates. Frequently, they establish a centralized intelligence processing center to collect and coordinate the amount of information required to make long-range intelligence estimates. Long-range intelligence focuses on the stable factors existing in an insurgency. For example, various demographic factors (ethnic, racial, social, economic, religious, and political characteristics of the area in which the underground movement takes places) are useful in identifying the members of the underground.

Information about the underground organization at national, district, and local level is basic in FID [Foreign Internal Defense] and/or IDAD operations. Collection of specific short-range intelligence about the rapidly changing variables of a local situation is critical. **Intelligence personnel must gather information on members of the underground, their movements, and their methods. Biographies and photos of suspected underground members, detailed information on their homes, families, education, work history, and associates are important features of short-range intelligence.**

Destroying its tactical units is not enough to defeat the enemy. The insurgent's underground cells or infrastructure must be neutralized first because the infrastructure is his main source of tactical intelligence and political control. **Eliminating the infrastructure within an area** achieves two goals: it ensures the government's control of the area, and it cuts off the enemy's main source of intelligence. An intelligence and operations command center (IOCC) is needed at district or province level. This organization becomes the nerve center for operations against the insurgent infrastructure. Information on insurgent infrastructure targets should come from such sources as the national police and other established intelligence nets and agents and individuals (informants).

The highly specialized and sensitive nature of clandestine intelligence collection demands specially selected and highly trained agents. Information from clandestine sources is often highly sensitive and requires tight control to protect the source. However, tactical information upon which a combat response can be taken should be passed to the appropriate tactical level.

The spotting, assessment, and recruitment of an agent is not a haphazard process regardless of the type agent being sought. During the assessment phase, the case officer determines the individual's degree of intelligence, access to target, available or necessary cover, and motivation. He initiates the recruitment and coding action only after he determines the individual has the necessary attributes to fulfill the needs.

All agents are closely observed and those that are not reliable are relieved. A few well-targeted, reliable agents are better and more economical than a large number of poor ones.

A system is needed to evaluate the agents and the information they submit. The maintenance of an agent master dossier (possibly at the SFOD B level) can be useful in evaluating the agent on the value and quality of information he has submitted. The dossier must contain a copy of the agent's source data report and every intelligence report he submitted.

Security forces can induce individuals among the general populace to become informants. **Security forces use various motives (civic-mindedness, patriotism, fear, punishment avoidance, gratitude, revenge or jealousy, financial rewards) as persuasive arguments**. They use the

assurance of protection from reprisal as a major inducement. Security forces must maintain the informant's anonymity and must conceal the transfer of information from the source to the security agent. The security agent and the informant may prearrange signals to coincide with everyday behavior.

Surveillance, the covert observation of persons and places, is a principal method of gaining and confirming intelligence information. Surveillance techniques naturally vary with the requirements of different situations. The basic procedures include mechanical observation (wiretaps or concealed microphones), observation from fixed locations, and physical surveillance of subjects.

Whenever a suspect is apprehended during an operation, a hasty interrogation takes place to gain immediate information that could be of tactical value. The most frequently used methods for gathering information (map studies and aerial observation), however, are normally unsuccessful. Most PWs cannot read a map. When they are taken on a visual reconnaissance flight, it is usually their first flight and they cannot associate an aerial view with what they saw on the ground.

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[...]

Members of the CSDF receive no pay for their civil duties. In most instances, however, they derive certain benefits from voluntary service. These benefits can range from priority of hire for CMO projects to a place at the head of ration lines. **In El Salvador, CSDF personnel (they were called civil defense there) were given a U.S.-funded life insurance policy with the wife or next of kin as the beneficiary.** If a CSDF member died in the line of duty, the widow or next of kin was ceremoniously paid by an HN official. The HN administered the program and a U.S. advisor who maintained accountability of the funds verified the payment. **The HN [Host Nation] exercises administrative and visible control**.

Responsiveness and speedy payment are essential in this process since the widow normally does not have a means of support and the psychological effect of the government assisting her in her time of grief impacts on the entire community. These and other benefits offered by or through the HN government are valuable incentives for recruiting and sustaining the CSDF.

[...]

The local CSDF members select their leaders and deputy leaders (CSDF groups and teams) in elections organized by the local authorities. In some cases, the HN [Host Nation] appoints a leader who is a specially selected member of the HN security forces trained to carry out this task. **Such appointments occurred in El Salvador where the armed forces have established a formal school to train CSDF commanders. Extreme care and close supervision are required to avoid abuses by CSDF leaders**.

[...]

The organization of a CSDF can be similar to that of a combat group. This organization is effective in both rural and urban settings. **For example, a basic group, having a strength of 107 members, is broken down into three 35-man elements plus a headquarters element of 2 personnel. Each 35-man element is further broken down into three 1 l-man teams and a headquarters element of 2 personnel. Each team consists of a team leader, an assistant team leader, and three 3-man cells. This organization can be modified to accommodate the number of citizens available to serve.**

[...]

Weapons training for the CSDF personnel is critical. Skill at arms decides the outcome of battle and must be stressed. Of equal importance is the maintenance and care of weapons. CSDF members are taught basic rifle marksmanship with special emphasis on firing from fixed positions and during conditions of limited visibility. Also included in the marksmanship training program are target detection and fire discipline.

Training ammunition is usually allocated to the CSDF on the basis of a specified number of rounds for each authorized weapon. A supporting HN government force or an established CSDF logistic source provides the ammunition to support refresher training.

[...]

Acts of misconduct by HN [Host Nation] personnel

All members of training assistance teams must understand their responsibilities concerning acts of misconduct by HN personnel. Team members receive briefings before deployment on what to do if they encounter or observe such acts. Common Article 3 of the four Geneva Conventions lists prohibited acts by parties to the convention. Such acts are-

> Violence to life and person, in particular, murder, mutilation, cruel treatment, and torture.
>
> Taking of hostages.
>
> Outrages against personal dignity, in particular, humiliating and degrading treatment.
>
> Passing out sentences and carrying out executions without previous judgment by a regularly constituted court that affords all the official guarantees that are recog-nized as indispensable by civilized people.
>
> The provisions in the above paragraph represent a level of conduct that the United States expects each foreign country to observe.

If team members encounter prohibited acts they can not stop, they will disengage from the activity, leave the area if possible, and report the incidents immediately to the proper in-country U.S. authorities. The country team will identify proper U.S. authorities during the team's initial briefing. **Team members will not discuss such matters with non-U.S. Government authorities such as journalists and civilian contractors.**

[...]

Most insurgents' doctrinal and training documents stress the use of pressure-type mines in the more isolated or less populated areas. They prefer using commandtype mines in densely populated areas.

These documents stress that when using noncommand-detonated mines, the insurgents use every means to inform the local populace on their location, commensurate with security regulations. In reality, most insurgent groups suffer from various degrees of deficiency in their C2 [Command & Control] systems. Their C2 does not permit them to verify that those elements at the operational level strictly follow directives and orders. In the case of the Frente Farabundo Marti de la Liberation Nacional (FMLN) in El Salvador, the individual that emplaces the mine is responsible for its recovery after the engagement. There are problems with this concept. The individual may be killed or the security forces may gain control of the area. Therefore, the recovery of the mine is next to impossible.

[...]

Homemade antipersonnel mines are used extensively in El Salvador, Guatemala and Malaysia. (Eighty percent of all El Salvadoran armed forces casualties in 1986 were due to mines; in 1987, soldiers wounded by mines and booby traps averaged 50 to 60 per month.) The important point to remember is that any homemade mine is the product of the resources available to the insurgent group. Therefore, no two antipersonnel mines may be the same in their configuration and materials. Insurgent groups depend to a great extent on materials discarded or lost by security forces personnel. The insurgents not only use weapons, ammunition, mines, grenades, and demolitions for their original purpose but also in preparing expedient mines and booby traps.

[...]

A series of successful minings carried out by the Viet Cong insurgents on the Cua Viet River, Quang Tri Province, demonstrated their resourcefulness in countering minesweeping tactics. Initially, chain-dragging sweeps took place morning and evening. After several successful mining attacks, it was apparent that they laid the mines after the minesweepers passed. Then, the boats using the river formed into convoys and transited the river with minesweepers 914 meters ahead oft he convoy. Nevertheless, boats of the convoy were successfully mined in mid-channel, indicating that the mines were again laid after the minesweeper had passed, possibly by using sampans. Several sampans were observed crossing or otherwise using the channel between the minesweepers and the convoy. The convoys were then organized so that the minesweepers worked immediately ahead of the convoy. One convoy successfully passed. The next convoy had its minesweepers mined and ambushed close to the river banks.

[...]

Military Advisors

[...]

Psychologically pressuring the HN [Host Nation] counterpart may sometimes be successful. Forms of psychological pressure may range from the obvious to the subtle. The advisor never applies direct threats, pressure, or intimidation on his counterpart Indirect psychological pressure may be applied by taking an issue up the chain of command to a higher U.S. commander. The U.S. commander can then bring his counterpart to force the subordinate counterpart to comply. Psychological pressure may obtain quick results but may have very negative side effects. The counterpart will feel alienated and possibly hostile if the advisor uses such techniques. Offers of payment in the form of valuables may cause him to become resentful of the obvious control being exerted over him. In short, psychologically pressuring a counterpart is not recommended. Such pressure is used only as a last resort since it may irreparably damage the relationship between the advisor and his counterpart

PSYOP [Psychological Operations] Support for Military Advisors

The introduction of military advisors requires preparing the populace with which the advisors are going to work. Before advisors enter a country, the HN [Host Nation] government carefully explains their introduction and clearly emphasizes the benefits of their presence to the citizens. It must provide a credible justification to minimize the obvious propaganda benefits the insurgents could derive from this action. The country's dissenting elements label our actions, no matter how well-intended, an "imperialistic intervention."

Once advisors are committed, their activities should be exploited. Their successful integration into the HN [Host Nation] society and their respect for local customs and mores, as well as their involvement with CA [Civil Affairs] projects, are constantly brought to light. **In formulating a realistic policy for the use of advisors, the commander must carefully gauge the psychological climate of the HN [Host Nation] and the United States.**

[...]

PRC [Population & Resources Control] Operations.

Advisors assist their counterparts in developing proper control plans and training programs for PRC measures. They also help coordinate plans and requests for materiel and submit recommendations to improve the overall effectiveness of operations. They can be helpful in preparing to initiate control.

> **Select, organize, and train paramilitary and irregular forces.**
> Develop PSYOP [Psychological Operations] activities to support PRC operations.
> Coordinate activities through an area coordination center (if established).

Establish and refine PRC operations.

Intensify intelligence activities.

Establish and refine coordination and communications with other agencies.

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- **Death Squads, Disappearances, and Torture (18 Dec 2007)**

The Unholy Trinity - From Latin America To Iraq

Death Squads, Disappearances, and Torture

By Greg Grandin

12/18/07 "TomDispatch " -- - The world is made up, as Captain Segura in Graham Greene's 1958 novel *Our Man in Havana* put it, of two classes: the torturable and the untorturable. "There are people," Segura explained, "who expect to be tortured and others who would be outraged by the idea."

Then — so Greene thought — Catholics, particularly Latin American Catholics, were more torturable than Protestants. Now, of course, Muslims hold that distinction, victims of a globalized network of offshore and outsourced imprisonment coordinated by Washington and knitted together by secret flights, concentration camps, and black-site detention centers. The CIA's deployment of Orwellian "Special Removal Units" to kidnap terror suspects in Europe, Canada, the Middle East, and elsewhere and the whisking of these "ghost prisoners" off to Third World countries to be tortured goes, today, by the term "extraordinary rendition," a hauntingly apt phrase. "To render" means not just to hand over, but to extract the essence of a thing, as well as to hand out a verdict and "give in return or retribution" — good descriptions of what happens during torture sessions.

In the decades after Greene wrote *Our Man in Havana*, Latin Americans coined an equally resonant word to describe the terror that had come to reign over most of the continent. Throughout the second half of the Cold War, Washington's anti-communist allies killed more than 300,000 civilians, many of whom were simply *desaparecido* — "disappeared." The expression was already well known in Latin America when, on accepting his 1982 Nobel Prize for Literature in Sweden, Colombian novelist Gabriel

García Márquez reported that the region's "disappeared number nearly one hundred and twenty thousand, which is as if suddenly no one could account for all the inhabitants of Uppsala."

When Latin Americans used the word as a verb, they usually did so in a way considered grammatically incorrect — in the transitive form and often in the passive voice, as in "she was disappeared." The implied (but absent) actor/subject signaled that everybody knew the government was responsible, even while investing that government with unspeakable, omnipotent power. The disappeared left behind families and friends who spent their energies dealing with labyrinthine bureaucracies, only to be met with silence or told that their missing relative probably went to Cuba, joined the guerrillas, or ran away with a lover. The victims were often not the most politically active, but the most popular, and were generally chosen to ensure that their sudden absence would generate a chilling ripple-effect.

An Unholy Trinity

Like rendition, disappearances can't be carried out without a synchronized, sophisticated, and increasingly transnational infrastructure, which, back in the 1960s and 1970s, the United States was instrumental in creating. In fact, it was in Latin America that the CIA and U.S. military intelligence agents, working closely with local allies, first helped put into place the unholy trinity of government-sponsored terrorism now on display in Iraq and elsewhere: death squads, disappearances, and torture.

Death Squads: Clandestine paramilitary units, nominally independent from established security agencies yet able to draw on the intelligence and logistical capabilities of those agencies, are the building blocks for any effective system of state terror. In Latin America, Washington supported the assassination of suspected Leftists at least as early as 1954, when the CIA successfully carried out a coup in Guatemala, which ousted a democratically elected president. But its first sustained sponsorship of death squads started in 1962 in Colombia, a country which then vied with Vietnam for Washington's attention.

Having just ended a brutal 10-year civil war, its newly consolidated political leadership, facing a still unruly peasantry, turned to the U.S. for help. In 1962, the Kennedy White House sent General William Yarborough, later better known for being the "Father of the Green Berets" (as well as for directing domestic military surveillance of prominent civil-rights activists, including Martin Luther King Jr.). Yarborough advised the Colombian government to set up an irregular unit to "execute paramilitary, sabotage and/or terrorist activities against known communist proponents" — as good a description of a death squad as any.

As historian Michael McClintock puts it in his indispensable book *Instruments of Statecraft*, Yarborough left behind a "virtual blueprint" for creating military-directed death squads. This was, thanks to U.S. aid and training, immediately implemented. The use of such death squads would

become part of what the counterinsurgency theorists of the era liked to call “counter-terror” — a concept hard to define since it so closely mirrored the practices it sought to contest.

Throughout the 1960s, Latin America and Southeast Asia functioned as the two primary laboratories for U.S. counterinsurgents, who moved back and forth between the regions, applying insights and fine-tuning tactics. By the early 1960s, death-squad executions were a standard feature of U.S. counterinsurgency strategy in Vietnam, soon to be consolidated into the infamous Phoenix Program, which between 1968 and 1972 “neutralized” more than 80,000 Vietnamese — 26,369 of whom were “permanently eliminated.”

As in Latin America, so too in Vietnam, the point of death squads was not just to eliminate those thought to be working with the enemy, but to keep potential rebel sympathizers in a state of fear and anxiety. To do so, the U.S. Information Service in Saigon provided thousands of copies of a flyer printed with a ghostly looking eye. The “terror squads” then deposited that eye on the corpses of those they murdered or pinned it “on the doors of houses suspected of occasionally harboring Viet Cong agents.” The technique was called “phrasing the threat” — a way to generate a word-of-mouth terror buzz.

In Guatemala, such a tactic started up at roughly the same time. There, a “white hand” was left on the body of a victim or the door of a potential one.

Disappearances: Next up on the counterinsurgency curriculum was Central America, where, in the 1960s, U.S. advisors helped put into place the infrastructure needed not just to murder but “disappear” large numbers of civilians. In the wake of the Cuban Revolution, Washington had set out to “professionalize” Latin America’s security agencies — much in the way the Bush administration now works to “modernize” the intelligence systems of its allies in the President’s “Global War on Terror.”

Then, as now, the goal was to turn lethargic, untrained intelligence units of limited range into an international network capable of gathering, analyzing, sharing, and acting on information in a quick and efficient manner. American advisors helped coordinate the work of the competing branches of a country’s security forces, urging military men and police officers to overcome differences and cooperate. Washington supplied phones, teletype machines, radios, cars, guns, ammunition, surveillance equipment, explosives, cattle prods, cameras, typewriters, carbon paper, and filing cabinets, while instructing its apprentices in the latest riot control, record keeping, surveillance, and mass-arrest techniques.

In neither El Salvador, nor Guatemala was there even a whiff of serious rural insurrection when the Green Berets, the CIA, and the U.S. Agency for International Development began organizing the first

security units that would metastasize into a dense, Central American-wide network of death-squad paramilitaries.

Once created, death squads operated under their own colorful names — an Eye for an Eye, the Secret Anticommunist Army, the White Hand — yet were essentially appendages of the very intelligence systems that Washington either helped create or fortified. As in Vietnam, care was taken to make sure that paramilitaries appeared to be unaffiliated with regular forces. To allow for a plausible degree of deniability, the "elimination of the [enemy] agents must be achieved quickly and decisively" — instructs a classic 1964 textbook *Counter-Insurgency Warfare* — "by an organization that must in no way be confused with the counterinsurgent personnel working to win the support of the population." But in Central America, by the end of the 1960s, the bodies were piling so high that even State Department embassy officials, often kept out of the loop on what their counterparts in the CIA and the Pentagon were up to, had to admit to the obvious links between US-backed intelligence services and the death squads.

Washington, of course, publicly denied its support for paramilitarism, but the practice of political disappearances took a great leap forward in Guatemala in 1966 with the birth of a death squad created, and directly supervised, by U.S. security advisors. Throughout the first two months of 1966, a combined black-ops unit made up of police and military officers working under the name "Operation Clean-Up" — a term US counterinsurgents would recycle elsewhere in Latin America — carried out a number of extrajudicial executions.

Between March 3rd and 5th of that year, the unit netted its largest catch. More than 30 Leftists were captured, interrogated, tortured, and executed. Their bodies were then placed in sacks and dropped into the Pacific Ocean from U.S.-supplied helicopters. Despite pleas from Guatemala's archbishop and more than 500 petitions of *habeas corpus* filed by relatives, the Guatemalan government and the American Embassy remained silent on the fate of the executed.

Over the next two and a half decades, U.S.-funded and trained Central American security forces would disappear tens of thousands of citizens and execute hundreds of thousands more. When supporters of the "War on Terror" advocated the exercise of the "Salvador Option," it was this slaughter they were talking about.

Following U.S.-backed coups in Brazil, Uruguay, Chile, and Argentina, death squads not only became institutionalized in South America, they became transnational. Throughout the late 1970s and 1980s, the CIA supported Operation Condor — an intelligence consortium established by Chilean dictator General Augusto Pinochet that synchronized the activities of many of the continent's security agencies and orchestrated an international campaign of terror and murder.
According to Washington's ambassador to Paraguay, the heads of these agencies kept "in touch with

one another through a U.S. communications installation in the Panama Canal Zone which covers all of Latin America." This allowed them to "co-ordinate intelligence information among the southern cone countries." Just this month, Pinochet's security chief General Manuel Contreras, who is serving a 240-year prison term in Chile for a wide-range of human rights violations, gave a TV interview in which he confirmed that the CIA's then-Deputy Director, General Vernon Walters (who served under director George H.W. Bush), was fully informed of the "international activities" of Condor.

Torture: Torture is the animating spirit of this triad, the unholiest of this unholy trinity. In Chile, Pinochet's henchmen killed or disappeared thousands — but they tortured tens of thousands. In Uruguay and Brazil, the state only disappeared a few hundred, but fear of torture and rape became a way of life, particularly for the politically engaged. Torture, even more than the disappearances, was meant not so much to get one person to talk as to get everybody else to shut up.

At this point, Washington can no longer deny that its agents in Latin America facilitated, condoned, and practiced torture. Defectors from death squads have described the instruction given by their U.S. tutors, and survivors have testified to the presence of Americans in their torture sessions. One Pentagon "torture manual" distributed in at least five Latin American countries described at length "coercive" procedures designed to "destroy [the] capacity to resist."

As Naomi Klein and Alfred McCoy have documented in their recent books, these field manuals were compiled using information gathered from CIA-commissioned mind control and electric-shock experiments conducted in the 1950s. Just as the "torture memos" of today's war on terror parse the difference between "pain" and "severe pain," "psychological harm" and "lasting psychological harm," these manuals went to great lengths to regulate the application of suffering. "The threat to inflict pain can trigger fears more damaging than the immediate sensation of pain," one handbook read.

"Before all else, you must be efficient," said U.S. police advisor Dan Mitrione, assassinated by Uruguay's revolutionary Tupamaros in 1970 for training security forces in the finer points of torture. "You must cause only the damage that is strictly necessary, not a bit more." Mitrione taught by demonstration, reportedly torturing to death a number of homeless people kidnapped off the streets of Montevideo. "We must control our tempers in any case," he said. "You have to act with the efficiency and cleanliness of a surgeon and with the perfection of an artist."

Florencio Caballero, having escaped from Honduras's notorious Battalion 316 into exile in Canada in 1986, testified that U.S. instructors urged him to inflict psychological, not "physical," pain "to study the fears and weakness of a prisoner." Force the victim to "stand up," the Americans taught Caballero, "don't let him sleep, keep him naked and in isolation, put rats and cockroaches in his cell, give him bad food, serve him dead animals, throw cold water on him, change the temperature." Sound familiar?

Yet, as Abu Ghraib demonstrated so clearly and the destroyed CIA interrogation videos would undoubtedly have made no less clear, maintaining a distinction between psychological and physical torture is not always possible. As one manual conceded, if a suspect does not respond, then the threat of direct pain "must be carried out." One of Caballero's victims, Inés Murillo, testified that her captors, including at least one CIA agent — his involvement was confirmed in Senate testimony by the CIA's deputy director — hung her from the ceiling naked, forced her to eat dead birds and rats raw, made her stand for hours without sleep and without being allowed to urinate, poured freezing water over her at regular intervals for extended periods, beat her bloody, and applied electric shocks to her body, including her genitals.

Anything Goes

Inés Murillo was definitely a member of Greene's torturable class. Yet Greene was writing in a more genteel time, when to torture the wrong person would be, as he put it, as cheeky as a "chauffeur" sleeping with a "peeress." Today, when it comes to torture, anything goes.

Ideologues in the war on terror, like Berkeley law professor John Yoo, have worked mightily to narrow the definition of what torture is, thereby expanding possibilities for its application. They have worked no less hard to increase the number of people throughout the world who could be subjected to torture — by defining anyone they cared to choose as a stateless "enemy combatant," and therefore not protected by national and international laws banning cruel and inhumane treatment. Even former Attorney General John Ashcroft has declared himself potentially torturable, telling a University of Colorado audience recently that he would be willing to submit to waterboarding "if it were necessary."

Things are so freewheeling that Harvard law professor Alan Dershowitz — who, at his perch at Harvard would undoubtedly be outraged if he were to be tortured — thinks that the practice needs to be regulated, as if it were a routine medical act. He has suggested empowering judges to issue "warrants" that would allow interrogators to insert "sterile needles" underneath finger nails to "to cause excruciating pain without endangering life."

Pinochet, who didn't shy away from justifying his actions in the name of Western Civilization, would never have dreamed of defending torture as brazenly as has Dick Cheney, backed up by legal theorists like Yoo. At the same time, revisionist historians, like Max Boot, and pundits, like the *Atlantic Monthly's* Robert Kaplan, rewrite history, claiming that operations like the Phoenix Program in Vietnam or the death squads in El Salvador were effective, morally acceptable tactics and should be emulated in fighting today's "War on Terror."

But this kind of promiscuity has its risks. In Latin America, the word "disappeared" came to denote not just victimization but moral repudiation, as the mothers and children of the disappeared led a

continental movement to restore the rule of law. They provide hope that one day the world-wide network of repression assembled by the Bush administration will be as discredited as Operation Condor is today in Latin America. As Greene wrote half a century ago, on the eve of the fall of another famous torturer, Cuba's Fulgencio Batista, "it is a real danger for everyone when what is shocking changes."

Greg Grandin is the author of a number of books, most recently Empire's Workshop: Latin America, the United States, and the Rise of the New Imperialism. He teaches history at NYU.

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- **The Myth Of Sectarianism (09 Jan 2008)**

The policy is divide to rule

By DAHR JAMAIL

09/01/08 "ISR" -- -- IF THE U.S. leaves Iraq, the violent sectarianism between the Sunni and Shia will worsen. This is what Republicans and Democrats alike will have us believe. This key piece of rhetoric is used to justify the continuance of the occupation of Iraq.

This propaganda, like others of its ilk, gains ground, substance, and reality due largely to the ignorance of those ingesting it. The snow job by the corporate media on the issue of sectarianism in Iraq has ensured that the public buys into the line that the Sunni and Shia will dice one another up into little pieces if the occupation ends.

It may be worthwhile to consider that prior to the Anglo-American invasion and occupation of Iraq there had never been open warfare between the two groups and certainly not a civil war. In terms of organization and convention, Iraqis are a tribal society and some of the largest tribes in the country comprise Sunni and Shia. Intermarriages between the two sects are not uncommon either.

Soon after arriving in Iraq in November 2003, I learned that it was considered rude and socially graceless to enquire after an individual's sect. If in ignorance or under compulsion I did pose the question the most common answer I would receive was, "I am Muslim, and I am Iraqi." On occasion there were more telling responses like the one I received from an older woman, "My mother is a Shia and my father a Sunni, so can you tell which half of me is which?" The accompanying smile said it all.

Large mixed neighborhoods were the norm in Baghdad. Sunni and Shia prayed in one another's mosques. Secular Iraqis could form lifelong associations with others without overt concern about their chosen sect. How did such a well-integrated society erupt into vicious fighting, violent sectarianism, and segregated neighborhoods? How is one to explain the millions in Iraq displaced from their homes simply because they were the wrong sect in the wrong place at the wrong time?

Back in December 2003 Sheikh Adnan, a Friday speaker at his mosque, had recounted a recent experience to me. During the first weeks of the occupation, a U.S. military commander had showed up in Baquba, the capital of Diyala province located roughly twenty-five miles northeast of Baghdad with a mixed Sunni-Shia population. He had asked to meet with all the tribal and religious leaders. On the appointed day the assembled leaders were perplexed when the commander instructed them to divide themselves, "Shia on one side of the room, Sunni on the other."

It would not be amiss, perhaps, to read in this account an implanting of a deliberate policy of "divide and rule" by the Anglo-American invaders from the early days of the occupation.

There have been no statistical surveys in recent years to determine the sectarian composition of Iraq. However, when the Coalition Provisional Authority, led by Paul Bremer, formed the first puppet Iraqi government, a precedent was set. The twenty-five seats in the Iraqi Governing Council (IGC), were assigned strictly along sectarian lines based on the assumption that 60 percent of the population is Shia, 20 percent Sunni, and 20 percent Kurds, who are mostly Sunni. For good measure, a couple of Turkoman and a Christian were thrown in.

It is evident that this puppet troupe deployed at the onset of "democracy" in Iraq was mandated to establish to the population that it was in the larger interest to begin thinking, at least politically, along sectarian and ethnic lines. Inevitably, political power struggles ensued and were cemented and exacerbated with the January 30, 2005, elections.

Mild surface scratching reveals a darker, largely unreported aspect of the divisive U.S. plan. A UN report released in September 2005 held Iraqi interior ministry forces responsible for an organized campaign of detention, torture, and killing of fellow Iraqis. These special police commando units were recruited from the Shia Badr Organization and Mehdi Army militias.

In Baghdad during November and December 2004, I heard widespread accounts of death squads assassinating Sunni resistance leaders and their key sympathizers. It was after the failure of Operation Phantom Fury, as the U.S. siege of Fallujah that November was named, that the Iraqi resistance spread across Iraq like wildfire. Death squads were set up to quell this fire by eliminating the leadership of this growing resistance.

The firefighting team had at its helm the U.S. ambassador to Iraq, John Negroponte, ably assisted by retired Colonel James Steele, adviser to Iraqi security forces. In 1984–86 Steele had been commander of the U.S. military advisory group in El Salvador. Between 1981 and 1985 Negroponte was U.S. ambassador to neighboring Honduras. In 1994 the Honduras Commission on Human Rights charged him with extensive human rights violations, reporting the torture and disappearance of at least 184 political workers. A CIA working group set up in 1996 to look into the U.S. role in Honduras has placed on record documents admitting that the operations Negroponte oversaw in Honduras were carried out by “special intelligence units,” better known as “death squads,” of CIA-trained Honduran armed units which kidnapped, tortured, and killed thousands of people suspected of supporting leftist guerrillas. Negroponte was ambassador to Iraq for close to a year from June 2004.

The only public mention of any of this I have seen was in Newsweek magazine on January 8, 2005. It quotes Donald Rumsfeld, U.S. secretary of defense at the time, who discussed the use of the “Salvador Option” in Iraq. It compared the strategy being planned for Iraq to the one used in Central America during the Reagan administration:

"Then, faced with a losing war against Salvadoran rebels, the U.S. government funded or supported “nationalist” forces that allegedly included so-called death squads directed to hunt down and kill rebel leaders and sympathizers. Eventually the insurgency was quelled, and many U.S. conservatives consider the policy to have been a success—despite the deaths of innocent civilians and the subsequent Iran-Contra arms-for-hostages scandal."

U.S.-backed sectarian death squads have become the foremost generator of death in Iraq, even surpassing the U.S. military machine, infamous for its capacity for industrial-scale slaughter. It is no secret in Baghdad that the U.S. military would regularly cordon off pro-resistance areas like the al-Adhamiyah neighborhood of Baghdad and allow “Iraqi police” and “Iraqi army” personnel, masked in black balaclavas, through their checkpoints to carry out abductions and assassinations in the neighborhood.

Consequently, almost all of Baghdad and much of Iraq is now segregated. The flipside is that violence in the capital city has subsided somewhat of late now that the endgame of forming the death squads, that of fragmenting the population, has been mostly accomplished.

Baghdad resident, retired General Waleed al-Ubaidy told my Iraqi colleague recently, “I would like to agree with the idea that violence in Iraq has decreased and that everything is fine, but the truth is far more bitter. All that has happened is a dramatic change in the demographic map of Iraq.” Baghdad today is a divided city.

Ahmad Ali, chief engineer from one of Baghdad's municipalities told my colleague, Ali al-Fadhily, "Baghdad has been torn into two cities and many towns and neighborhoods. There is now the Shia Baghdad and the Sunni Baghdad to start with. Each is divided into little town-like pieces of the hundreds of thousands who had to leave their homes." Al-Adhamiyah, on the Russafa side of Tigris River, is now entirely Sunni, the other areas are all Shia. The al-Karkh side of the river is purely Sunni except for Shula, Hurriya, and small strips of Aamil which are dominated by Shia militias.

Not being privy to the U.S. machinations, Iraqis in Baghdad blame the Iraqi police and Iraqi army for the sectarian assassinations and wonder why the U.S. military does little or nothing to stop them. "The Americans ask [Prime Minister Nouri al] Maliki to stop the sectarian assassinations knowing full well that his ministers are ordering the sectarian cleansing," says Mahmood Farhan of the Muslim Scholars Association, a leading Sunni group.

A more recent manifestation of the divisive U.S. policy has been the "purchase" of members of the largely Sunni resistance in Baghdad and in al-Anbar province that constitutes one-third of the geographic area of Iraq. Payments made by the U.S. military to collaborating tribal sheikhs already amount to $17 million. The money passes directly into the hands of fighters who in many cases were engaged in launching attacks against the occupiers less than two weeks ago. Tribal fighters are being paid $300 per month to patrol their areas, particularly against foreign mercenaries. Today the military refers to these men as "concerned local citizens," "awakening force," or simply "volunteers."

Arguably, violence in the area has temporarily declined. "Those Americans thought they would decrease the resistance attacks by separating the people of Iraq into sects and tribes," announced a thirty-two-year-old man from Ramadi, who spoke with al-Fadhily on terms of anonymity, "They know they are sinking deeper into the shifting sand, but the collaborators are fooling the Americans right now, and will in the end use this strategy against them." By the end of November 2007, the U.S. military had enlisted 77,000 of these fighters, and hopes to add another 10,000. Eighty-two percent of the fighters are Sunni.

Politically, the U.S. administration maintains its support of the Shia-dominated government in Baghdad. The fallout has been blatantly clear. On the first of December, Adnan al-Dulaimi, head of the Accordance Front, which is the Sunni political bloc in the Iraqi Parliament, was placed under house arrest by Iraqi and U.S. security forces in the Adil neighborhood, west of Baghdad. Iraqi security forces also detained his son Makki and forty-five of his guards. They were accused of manufacturing car bombs and killing Sunni militia members in the neighborhood who have been working with the U.S. military. Members of the Accordance Front, which holds 44 of the 275 seats in the Iraqi Parliament, promptly walked out. Maliki has, several times in the last several weeks, hurled public accusations and

criticisms at al-Dulaimi, sending political and sectarian shock waves, further crippling the crumbling political process.

It is important to mention that Maliki, a U.S. puppet par excellence, acts only as told. After the January 2005 elections, the government that came into power had chosen Ibrahim al-Jaafari as its prime minister. When Jaafari refused to toe the U.S./UK line, Condoleezza Rice and her UK counterpart Jack Straw flew to Baghdad, and before their short trip ended Jaafari was out and Maliki was in as prime minister.

In the context of these facts let us now return to the big question: Will Iraq descend further into a sectarian nightmare if the occupation ends?

An indicator of how things will likely resolve themselves upon the departure of foreign troops may be drawn from the southern city of Basra. In early September, 500 British troops left one of Saddam Hussein's palaces in the heart of the city and ceased to conduct regular foot patrols. According to the British military, the overall level of violence in the city has decreased 90 percent since then.

This may or may not be a guarantee of a drop in sectarianism upon the departure of the invading armies, but it does prove that when the primary cause of the violence, sectarian strife, instability, and chaos is removed from the equation of Iraq, things are bound to improve rapidly.

Are we still going to believe that the occupation is holding Iraq together?

Dahr Jamail, who spent eight months in Iraq as an independent journalist, is author of Beyond the Green Zone: Dispatches From an Unembedded Journalist in Occupied Iraq (Haymarket Books, 2007). The New York Times' Stephen Kinzer describes his writing as "international journalism at its best." Dahr is currently on a national speaking tour sponsored by Haymarket and his articles can be found at http://www.dahrjamailiraq.com/ .

- **Loaded Language and Loaded Guns (03 Oct 2007)**

The Meaning of Opposites

By Charles Sullivan

10/03/07 "ICH" -- - -One can no longer understand US governmental policy on the basis of conventional language or traditional wisdom. Language itself and its long-established meanings were

long ago twisted and distorted in order to deceive the people. Now war is peace and terror and occupation is liberation. In order to make sense of what is happening, it is important to understand everything within the context of a specific economic philosophy, and the distorted capitalist system that spawned it.

That ideology was crafted by a diminutive economist named Milton Friedman, at the University of Chicago some five decades ago. The holy trinity of Friedman's version of capitalism—privatization of the public domain, corporate deregulation, and deep cuts in social spending—has resulted in enormous societal inequity and socio-economic classes. It has given us the haves and the have-nots, the haves and the have-mores.

Friedman and his disciples, collectively known as 'The Chicago School' do not believe in a minimum wage—much less a living wage, unions, worker rights, environmental protections, worker safety, or any other kind of restraint imposed upon corporations. In Friedman's view, the market should rule and profitability should be the guiding principle, the end results always justifying the means.

The implementation of Friedman's version of unfettered capitalism relies upon munificent corporate welfare, tax cuts to the wealthy, exploitation of workers, and the outright theft of other sovereign nation's natural wealth through military force—including oil and minerals, water supplies and other societal infrastructure; cheap labor, and a procession of consumers of goods and services without limits—an impossibility in a closed ecological system.

Convincing the public to support policies that are, in fact, detrimental to them, requires enormous marketing skill, as well as a corporate owned and operated propaganda apparatus that is second to none. This is accomplished by cloaking harmful policies in patriotic language, and other forms of seduction.

In order to achieve this objective, which is really nothing less than unqualified global corporate dominance, the public domain must be privatized and run not for use, but for profit; and the unparalleled might of the US military brought to bear against any nation or people who stand in the way.

It is this thinking—the dominant economic paradigm that shapes all US policy—that has brought us an endless succession of wars and other human tragedies; exacerbated global warming, and unprecedented rapacious planetary destruction, including the mass extinction of much of the world's flora and fauna — all for corporate profit.

Decades ago, in order to field test the economic theories that were formulated by the right wing think

tanks at The Chicago School, Friedman and his disciples descended like locusts upon Latin America. The results were devastating: Democratically elected governments were systematically overthrown and brutal dictators friendly to US business interests were installed in their place—all of which were subsidized by US tax dollars with the complicity of the CIA.

As a result, US-trained death squads roamed the countryside torturing, murdering, and disappearing dissidents, union organizers, and indigenous land holders—a process that continues to this day. The corporate media, itself, an essential cog in Friedman's capitalist machine, referred to these death squads as freedom fighters, and canonized the likes Ronald Reagan as champions of liberty.

But the recipients of US policy in Latin America—those who survived them—know better. Now the same policies are being implemented in the Middle East, and with the same disastrous results. Elements of Friedman's policies have been in play here in the US for decades, and the intent is to do to the US what was done in Latin America and Iraq.

Language is a tool that can be used to either conceal or reveal truth; it can be used to inform or to distort. Given the track record of private enterprise, it is not surprising that everything associated with Milton Friedman's capitalism has been hopelessly perverted, and language is no exception.

Understanding the role played by Friedman and his disciples in shaping US policy—a doctrine adopted and praised by Republicans and Democrats alike, is critical in order to bring the big picture of world events, including our own domestic policies, into clear focus.

The disciples of Friedman's economic theorem have skillfully manipulated the language to deceive the subjects of those policies. Stripped of the garments of seductive language, the hidden kernel of truth is clearly seen: unregulated corporate power that masquerades as free market trade. The nations that have undergone Friedman's economic shock therapy: Chile, Argentina, Brazil and Indonesia, and many others, were opened up to privatization and corporate plunder that soon left them impoverished and wasted.

The once sustainable and vibrant local economies, most of them characterized by broad public ownership, were thoroughly globalized, as capitalism was forced upon those who had rejected it at the ballot box or through armed revolution. Local manufactures were no longer protected from multi-nationals: prices soared, wages fell, workers lost their jobs, unemployment rose astronomically, and the infrastructure that once provided inexpensive or free public services—among them, potable water and inexpensive food—were privatized and rendered unaffordable to the multitudes.

Shared prosperity quickly gave way to abject poverty and misery; while predatory US corporations bled

nation after nation of their natural wealth, and kept the profits to themselves.

Here in the US, the people of New Orleans and other Gulf Coast cities in the wake of Hurricane Katrina experienced the same economic shock and awe as Latin America. The poor were relocated and resorts for the rich quickly supplanted affordable public housing. The public school system was virtually dismantled and privatized. Contractors such as Halliburton and Blackwater reaped enormous profits on the misery and suffering of the Gulf Region's working poor. Corporate profits mattered more than the lives of the people. New Orleans will never be the same.

All of this was accomplished by stripping language of its traditional connotations and perverting it into its opposite meaning. Thus lies became truth and predatory capitalism morphed into beneficent public service. The new definitions are designed to conceal the real intent of the perpetrators of crimes against humanity, and are employed as marketing tools to make blatant theft and exploitation appear palatable to the multitudes, and to the helpless victims of unfettered capitalism.

Had the hidden agenda of our elected officials been widely known to the public, the people would likely find these policies not only objectionable, but morally reprehensible and offensive. Now Orwellian doublespeak is the norm, resulting in the enforcement arm of capitalism—the police state and an emerging Gestapo society, perpetrated in the name of a democracy that does not even exist.

The dictum of freedom, as understood by rational and conscientious human beings everywhere, has traditionally been applied to people and refers to their treatment by one another and their respective governments. However, when free market capitalists speak of freedom and democracy, as we are witnessing in the catastrophic situation they have created in the Middle East, they are not referring to human freedoms at all—but to unfettered capitalism, absolute corporate rule, and human servitude to wealth garnered at public expense—essentially a global terrorist slave state. That is what is meant by so called free markets as it pertains to the human condition.

Thus democracy, rather than meaning self-government of the people, by the people, and for the people, is perverted into support for deregulated corporations that are accountable to no one, the ultimate arbiter of all forms of power—the market as a Holy Grail; the decisive triumph of private ownership over people and the public welfare by the global elite.

And that, in a nutshell, is what we are fighting for not only in the Middle East, but in 135 nations around the world. These are the American interests the military is protecting; these are the freedoms they are defending from democracy.

In the idiom of free market capitalism, all things—whether soil, mineral, plant or animal, including

human beings (wage slaves), are diminished and commodified, and valued only in proportion as they can be privatized and exploited by the champions of Laissez-Faire capitalism.

Furthermore, let it be understood that the president and his cabinet, as well as every member of Congress (with one exception), are disciples of Friedman's economic paradigm. Not only are they doing everything in their power to implement Friedman's policies, they have been doing so for a very long time.

This perception certainly demystifies the remarkable homogeneity of US policy that has sent countless young men and women dressed in military uniforms to their deaths, and disappeared millions of leftist dissidents around the world. And it will continue unabated unless we the people put a stop to it.

Author's note: Anyone wishing a more complete understanding of these policies should read Naomi Klein's authoritative new book, The Shock Doctrine: The Rise of Disaster Capitalism. I cannot underscore enough the breadth and importance of Ms. Klein's work in understanding capitalism, corporate globalization, and the grossly distorted governmental policies they have spawned. Every citizen, regardless of nationality, should read this book. It is that important.

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- **Victims of the death squads, 16 Sept 2007**

One family's harrowing story of kidnap and murder in Iraq

Nadia Hayali tells Kim Sengupta of the day her family were seized and she lost her husband, a story that gives the lie to claims that US forces are succeeding in Baghdad

By Kim Sengupta

09/16/07 "The Independent" -- - Anyone who believes that the American-led "surge" in Iraq is succeeding should hear the story of Mohammed and Nadia al-Hayali. Both fluent in English – Nadia, who was born in Montpellier, also speaks French – they were the kind of well-educated, modern Iraqis who should have been the driving force behind a new secular democracy. Yet Mohammed is believed dead at the hands of kidnappers who seized the whole family, and Nadia is living the miserable half-life of the exile with their two children in Jordan.

While the US commander in Iraq, General David Petraeus, spouted statistics in Washington last week to indicate that progress was being made in the Iraqi capital – suicide bombings down, fewer sectarian murders – what happened to the Hayalis dispels this carefully constructed impression of greater normality. Simply to recount my friendship with them demonstrates how far Baghdad has sunk.

I first met Mohammed, then 40, and Nadia, 39, at the Hunting Club, a private establishment behind high walls, surrounded by armed guards. With a joint income of about $1,100 a month, the couple represented the comfortable middle class. The club was the one public place in the city where the Hayalis and their set could socialise in safety, using the restaurants, tennis courts and swimming pool.

This was the autumn of 2004. President Bush had declared "mission accomplished" in Iraq 18 months earlier. Although the insurgency was already under way, with dead bodies turning up in the streets, daily power cuts, and petrol queues looping around blocks for miles, the Hayalis still hoped that the country would settle down after a period of turbulence. They lived in al-Jamiya, a once-prosperous district now described as "mainly Sunni", where previously sectarian labels did not matter. Before the war, when Mohammed was working as an internet engineer and Nadia as a teacher, the fact that he was a Sunni and she was a Shia did not seem worthy of comment.

Nadia had initially thought that the invasion was worth the pain to get rid of Saddam Hussein and bring an end to UN sanctions. Mohammed, who after the fighting earned about $500 a month working for the medical charity Merlin, opposed the war – not, he stressed, because he was a lover of the regime, but because he thought it would open a Pandora's box of trouble. He was right, but in 2004 it was still possible for me to visit them at home, where Nadia, also a talented artist, had decorated the place with Japanese vases, Rajasthani prints and her own paintings.

I would stop at Ali al-Hamdani's renowned pastry shop to pick up presents for the children, and met the Hayalis' relations and friends. The talk was often of what they would do when life returned to normal. There were trips to the national art museum and the theatre.

When I returned a year later, at the end of 2005, everything had changed. Suicide bombings were a daily occurrence. Death squads, often made up of members of the security forces, roamed the streets, and kidnappings had become common. It was no longer safe to go to restaurants or the theatre, and outings to the Hunting Club had stopped too, after it emerged that abductors were watching the entrances for potential victims.

My visits to the Hayalis had to be carefully planned to avoid anyone seeing me. Groups of men in dark glasses cruised around in Audis and BMWs; they were insurgents, I was told, looking for US or Iraqi

security convoys to attack. Shias in Jamiya were beginning to feel unsafe, and the middle-class exodus from Iraq was well under way.

The Hayalis, like many of their friends, had by now made the decision to emigrate. "We don't want to leave. It's our country," said Mohammed. "But what is left now? The place is destroyed. This is what liberation has done to us." The family's income had dropped by half, because the Baghdad International School, where Nadia worked, closed as funds dried up and pupils fled the country.

Mohammed now kept a gun in the house, an old Glock. "It is the sort of thing one has to have nowadays," he said sheepishly. "But I don't even know how to use it. It's things like this that make me want to leave even more." The last time I saw him was when they were waiting for visas to Dubai, which came through after I left. "We are just surviving day by day," said Nadia. "Terrible things are taking place all around us. Unless we get out now, something bad will happen."

I learned what happened next in a phone call from Nadia in April this year. Her voice was flat, emotionless. The family had been kidnapped by an armed gang, she said. She and the two children, Dahlia, eight, and Abdullah, 10, had eventually been freed, but Mohammed had been kept captive, despite the payment of a ransom. It was not until this summer, when I saw Nadia and the children in Amman, the capital of Jordan, that the final tragedy came out.

"Do you remember how it was, even a few years ago?" asked Nadia. The confident, articulate woman I remembered had gone, and the trauma of recent months was written on her pale, drawn face. "We thought things couldn't get worse, violence will ease off, things will get better. How wrong we were."

In the final days before their departure, she said, they were unloading the shopping from their Jeep Cherokee when half a dozen men came into their driveway, carrying Kalashnikov rifles and pistols. "They said they wanted me. Somebody had told them that I was a Christian, that I was working for the Americans at the airport. Even to this day I do not know who said this about me, or why. Mohammed insisted that he go too. The children were clinging on to us, and of course we could not leave them behind.

"We were blindfolded. They put Mohammed in one car and I was with the children in the other. There was one man who kept questioning me about my religion. They said Christians were targets because of what was going on in Iraq, but also because of what was happening to Muslims in Europe, like the controversy over the hijab in France. I told them I was not a Christian, I didn't work at the airport, that I was a teacher. They were a Sunni gang who said they were followers of al-Qa'ida.

"At one point Dahlia started screaming, and one of the men stuck his gun against her face and said he

would shoot her unless she kept quiet. I covered her with my body, that is all I could do."

The family were taken to Habaniyah, an hour's drive away, where Mohammed was put in a room by himself. "There were about six or seven in the gang. One of them was young, only about 15. He was very polite, he called me khala – Auntie. I remember thinking, 'How did this young boy end up with these killers?'

"Dahlia could not speak, she could not even sit up, she just lay shivering. I could not think of anything else but her and Abdullah. They questioned me for five hours. Then they took Abdullah into another room and asked him questions as well. They gave us dinner, chicken and some rice, but I could not eat anything, I was feeling sick. Dahlia kept waking up, she was having nightmares."

The next morning the abductors said they were going to search the family's home. They were looking, they said, for money, the family's identification documents and their computers. Sitting in their darkened, airless captivity, the family were not to know that the computers would seal Mohammed's fate. He had been working for a fund-raising agency for small businesses in Baghdad, and this had brought him into contact with US and Iraqi government organisations, classing him as a collaborator in the eyes of his captors.

"They looked through Mohammed's laptop. Then they began to question him in another room. I could hear raised voices. A little later I managed to see him. He whispered to me that I must deny all knowledge of his work. I said, 'But you have not done anything wrong.' He insisted that I must not argue with the gang, so when I was questioned, I simply told them I did not know anything about his work. They kept on saying I was lying, but I just stuck to my story. Then they questioned Abdullah about it, and he genuinely knew nothing.

"A little while later they began beating Mohammed, whipping him with their belts. I could hear the blows. The only thing I could do was try to distract the children from the noise. Then it fell silent. I was afraid that they had killed him. I said I wanted to go to the toilet, and saw him lying on the floor, covered by a blanket. He was hurt, but not dead.

"I was begging the men not to kill Mohammed, and let him go. I told them that our religion asks us to forgive people. They said they would try to make sure he was not killed, but their bosses would make the decision."

The next day Nadia and the children were told that they would be released. Mohammed would be kept behind for further investigation. The gang needed Nadia on the outside to get the ransom money they were going to demand.

"That last meeting with Mohammed was just so terrible. He was telling me he did not think he would get out alive, he was saying that he would not see us ever again. He was crying, he asked me to look after Dahlia and Abdullah, tell them how much he loved them. I said to him, 'I will refuse to leave, I'll stay with you.' But he said I must go for the sake of the children. That was the last time I saw him."

Nadia and the children were dropped off near their home. She was told that they must not leave the house, and to await messages about what to do next. In the end a ransom of $10,000 was delivered by Nadia after she had gathered the money with the help of relations and friends, but Mohammed was almost certainly already dead.

"I stayed at the house waiting for news," she told me. "I could see men from the gang out in the street. I had one phone call from them, asking me why I wasn't sending the children to school. I said it was too dangerous, there were a lot of kidnappings. The man said it would be safe, they would look after Dahlia and Abdullah. I really did not have an answer to that."

Finally Nadia and the children fled to her parents' home, in a safer part of the city. There they learned that two members of the family had gone to the Baghdad morgue, having heard that Mohammed's body might be there. But when they arrived, they were told that the body had already been buried. They were shown a photograph of a man; one of the relatives thought it was Mohammed, while the other was unsure.

"I never went back to our home," said Nadia. Instead she took the children to Dubai, then Amman, where they live in a tiny flat and she has found an office job. "I keep on thinking maybe it was not Mohammed in that photo at the morgue. Perhaps the kidnappers are still holding him. But I know this is probably a false hope.

"I just cannot understand why Mohammed is not here with us. We have known each other all our lives. Ours isn't an arranged marriage – we met at high school. I know many people have suffered in Iraq. But when you have spent your life with someone, someone you love, it is hard, very hard."

The greatest tragedy is that the story of the Hayalis is far from unique. No police report was ever made on Mohammed's kidnapping and probable murder, so it is not included in the figures purporting to show that the "surge" is working. The same is true of vast numbers of deaths, because going to the police, infiltrated and dominated by militias in many districts of Baghdad, is considered futile or downright dangerous. For Nadia and others like her, George Bush's last throw of the dice is irrelevant.

- **The Bombing of the Golden Dome Mosque; one year later (12 Feb 2007)**

By Mike Whitney

02/12/07 "ICH" - -- - According to the Muslim calendar, today--February 12--is the one year anniversary of the bombing of Samarra's Golden Dome Mosque. The blast is frequently pointed to as the event which transformed the conflict from an armed struggle against foreign occupation into a civil war. This change in the narrative has had some real benefits for the Bush administration by diverting attention from the nonstop fighting between American troops and the Sunni-led resistance.

The notion that Iraq is in the throes of civil war is rarely challenged in the western media despite the fact that Iraq has no history of the type of sectarian violence which is now ripping the country apart. Veteran journalist Robert Fisk put it this way:

"Iraq is not a sectarian society. People are intermarried. Shiites and Sunnis marry each other...Some from the militias and death squads want a civil war (but) there has never been a civil war in Iraq. The real question I ask myself is: who are these people who are trying to provoke a civil war? The Americans will say that it's al Qaida or the Sunni insurgents; it is the death squads. Many of the death squads work for the Ministry of Interior? Who pays the militia men who make up the death squads? We do; the occupation authorities." (Robert Fisk, "Somebody is trying to provoke a Civil War in Iraq")

So, if we accept the idea that Iraq is in a civil war, aren't we ignoring the fact that other forces may be at play just below the surface?

There's no doubt that the Bush administration is engaged in a secret war in Iraq. A great deal has already been written about "the Salvador Option" which involves the arming and training of death squads for spreading terror among sympathizers of the resistance. But it is also likely that many of the bombings we see are, in fact, false flag operations intended to pit Arab against Arab, and thereby undermine the greatest threat of all, Iraqi nationalism.

False flag operations are commonplace in foreign occupation. Robert Fisk cites a few examples in his article, "All This Talk of Civil War, Now This" (UK Independent, 2006):

"I think of the French OAS in Algeria in 1962, setting off bombs among France's Muslim Algerian community. I recall the desperate efforts of the French authorities to set Algerian Muslim against Algerian Muslim which led to half a million dead souls.

And I'm afraid I also think of Ireland and the bombings in Dublin and Monaghan in 1974, which, as the years go by, appear to have an ever closer link, via Protestant "loyalist" paramilitaries, to elements

of British military security."

It's impossible to know how much of the violence we see is real and how much is "black-ops". Divide and rule is an adage that is as old as war itself and it is certainly being used in Iraq. In fact, the Bush administration commissioned the Rand Corporation to draw up a plan which promotes this very strategy.

The Rand Study was called: "US Strategy in the Muslim World after 9-11". The document provided "A framework to identify major ideological orientations within Islam, examines critical cleavages between Muslim groups." The goal of the paper was to develop a Shaping Strategy for pacifying Muslim populations where the US has commercial or strategic interests. The conclusions of the document are enlightening. Rand suggests the US, "Align its policy with Shiite groups who aspire to have more participation in government and greater freedoms of political and religious expression. If this alignment can be brought about, it could erect a barrier against radical Islamic movements and may create a foundation for a stable U.S. position in the Middle East."

Clearly, the administration is following the recommendations Rand study and has decided elevate the Shiites over the previously dominant Sunnis.

The Bush administration also appears to be applying parts of another theory which was conjured up by the fiercely nationalistic, Oded Yinon, in his "The Zionist Plan for the Middle East". Yinon said:

"It is obvious that the above military assumptions, and the whole plan too, depend also on the Arabs continuing to be even more divided than they are now, and on the lack of any truly mass movement among them... Every kind of inter-Arab confrontation will assist us in the short run and will shorten the way to the more important aim of breaking Iraq up into denominations as in Syria and Lebanon... Syria will fall apart."

Similar to the Rand study's recommendations, Yinon's strategy is to pit Sunni against Shiite in a way that destroys Arab unity and to leaves the country weak and fragmented.

Again, there's nothing new in these theories, but we should realize that much of the media narrative is crafted in a way that conceals the truth while promoting the objectives of the US occupation. Beyond the smokescreen of "civil war" (some of which is real, of course) is a coherent and carefully articulated plan to quash the resistance and steal Iraq's resources. That is the real force which is generating much of the violence that we see on the ground.

In practical terms, Robert Fisk provides a credible description of how these black-ops are executed in

Iraq. In his article, “Seen through a Syrian Lens” (UK Independent 4-29-06) the Fisk gives the details of a conversation he had with a trusted “security source” who told Fisk that: (the US) “is desperately trying to provoke a civil war around Baghdad in order to reduce its own military casualties.”

"I swear to you that we have very good information," Fisk recounts, "One young Iraqi man told us that he was trained by the Americans as a policeman in Baghdad and he spent 70 per cent of his time learning to drive and 30 per cent in weapons training. They said to him: 'Come back in a week.' When he went back, they gave him a mobile phone and told him to drive into a crowded area near a mosque and phone them. He waited in the car but couldn't get the right mobile signal. So he got out of the car to where he received a better signal. Then his car blew up."

As incredible as it seems, Fisk assures us that he’s heard the same story many times from different sources.
Again:

"There was another man, trained by the Americans for the police. He too was given a mobile and told to drive to an area where there was a crowd - maybe a protest - and to call them and tell them what was happening. Again, his new mobile was not working. So he went to a landline phone and called the Americans and told them: 'Here I am, in the place you sent me and I can tell you what's happening here.' And at that moment there was a big explosion in his car."

Fisk is a hardnosed journalist not easily given to exaggeration. His account of these incidents simply adds to the growing body of “hearsay” evidence that US intelligence agencies are directly involved in inciting sectarian violence. These stories cannot be corroborated, but, of course, that hasn’t stopped many Iraqis from believing that the US is behind the daily bombings.

Of course, the question of “who” is funding and facilitating the terrorism in Iraq presents a serious challenge to an administration that has based its foreign policy in terms of a war on terror. Public support would quickly erode if the American people knew that Bush was directly involved in the same activities as our nemesis, al Qaida.

Traditionally, the United States has no problem supporting Islamic extremists as long as they serve our overall foreign policy objectives. The CIA funded the mujahideen in Afghanistan, the KLA (Kosovo Liberation Army) in Kosovo, and now provides material support and weaponry to the MEK Mujahideen-e- Khalq; a Marxist militant group which is on the State Dept list of terrorist organizations. What matters is not ideology but whether or not the groups can advance Washington’s imperial aspirations.



This demonstrates that Bush's finger-wagging against "ideological extremism" or "radical Islam" is just more empty rhetoric. Ideology plays a very small part in the current war. Dick Cheney's comments in a speech to the Institute of Petroleum in London in 1999 may shed a bit of light on this point. He said, "By 2010 we will need on the order of an additional fifty million barrels a day. So where is the oil going to come from? ... While many regions of the world offer great oil opportunities, the Middle East with two thirds of the world's oil and the lowest cost, is still where the prize ultimately lies."

While depletion of oil reserves have accelerated beyond Cheney's expectations at the time ;(the world's 4 largest oil fields are in a state of irreversible decline) the facts remain the same. The world is running out of oil and the US intends to deploy its military to seize vital reserves wherever they may be. The war on terror is simply the mask that conceals this ongoing struggle.

The Bush administration seems less and less concerned that their "divide and rule" strategy remains hidden from the public. There've been a number of articles in the mainstream press about Bush's $86 million gift to Mahmoud Abbas' to train and equip special shock-troops to crush the democratically-elected Hamas government. And, there's been ample coverage of the CIA's covert operations in Lebanon that are directed against Hezbollah. The only conclusion we can draw from this, is that Bush really doesn't care anymore if the world knows that the US is purposely fueling the anarchy which is quickly spreading across the entire Middle East. (The latest accusation that Iran is supplying roadside bombs to the Iraqi resistance just shows how sloppy the administration has gotten in managing its propaganda. Iran, of course, is Shiite, whereas, the Iraqi resistance is predominantly Sunni. The likelihood that Iran is providing roadside bombs to the former members of Saddam's army is remote to say the least.)

Bush's "dirty war" in Iraq has become increasingly violent and confused. The neocon trust in "creative destruction" has succeeded in fragmenting Iraqi society, but the long-term prospects for normalization (or resource extraction) appear bleak. At this point, it seems irrelevant whether the bombing of the Golden-dome Mosque was the work of Sunni extremists or the US intelligence agencies. After all, propaganda may be useful for shaping public opinion but it cannot win wars. And that is the dilemma that Bush now faces.

It has been exactly one year since the Askirya Mosque was flattened. Most Americans now believe that we are mired in an "unwinnable" war. Public support is eroding, the violence is escalating, the administration is drifting sideways, and the end is nowhere in sight. The inability of the administration to think politically or change course has thrust America to the brink of its worst defeat in history.

- **Top secret army cell breaks terrorists (05 Feb 2007)**

By Sean Rayment
Last Updated: 1:03AM GMT 05 Feb 2007



The JSG was formed in the '80s to tackle the IRA

Deep inside the heart of the "Green Zone", the heavily fortified administrative compound in Baghdad, lies one of the most carefully guarded secrets of the war in Iraq. It is a cell from a small and anonymous British Army unit that goes by the deliberately meaningless name of the Joint Support Group (JSG), and it has proved to be one of the Coalition's most effective and deadly weapons in the fight against terror.

Its members - servicemen and women of all ranks recruited from all three of the Armed Forces - are trained to turn hardened terrorists into coalition spies using methods developed on the mean streets of Ulster during the Troubles, when the Army managed to infiltrate the IRA at almost every level. Since war broke out in Iraq in 2003, they have been responsible for running dozens of Iraqi double agents.

Working alongside the Special Air Service and the American Delta Force as part of the Baghdad-based counter-terrorist unit known as Task Force Black, they have supplied intelligence that has saved hundreds of lives and resulted in some of the most notable successes against the myriad terror groups fighting in Iraq. Only last week, intelligence from the JSG is understood to have led to a series of successful operations against Sunni militia groups in southern Baghdad.

Information obtained by the unit is also understood to have inspired one of the most successful operations carried out by Task Force Black, in November 2005, when SAS snipers shot dead three suicide bombers.

The killing of Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, the leader of al-Qaeda in Iraq up until his death in June last year, followed intelligence obtained by the JSG, as did the rescue of the kidnapped peace campaigner, Norman Kember.

"The JSG is the coalition's secret weapon," revealed one defence source. "Their job is to recruit and run covert human intelligence sources or agents - we never use the term informer. The Americans are in awe of the unit because they have nothing like them within their military."

During the Troubles, the JSG operated under the cover name of the Force Research Unit (FRU), which between the early 1980s and the late 1990s managed to penetrate the very heart of the IRA. By targeting and then "turning" members of the paramilitary organisation with a variety of "inducements" ranging from blackmail to bribes, the FRU operators developed agents at virtually every command level within the IRA.

The unit was renamed following the Stevens Inquiry into allegations of collusion between the security forces and protestant paramilitary groups, and, until relatively recently continued to work exclusively in Northern Ireland.

The JSG recruits men and women of any rank from all three services up to the age of 42. Volunteers attend a two week pre-selection course where those not in possession of the unique set of skills required to handle agents successfully are weeded out.

Candidates who get through pre-selection then spend the next four months at the Intelligence Corps headquarters at Chicksands, Bedfordshire, being taught driving and close-quarter battle skills - operators must be capable of using a wide variety of weapons but must be expert shots with a pistol.

But most important of all, -volunteers must be able to befriend people they may actually despise, win their trust and persuade them to become agents, which in some cases will mean getting them to inform on friends and relatives. Those who eventually pass the course can expect to be posted to Baghdad, Basra and Afghanistan.

Sources have told The Sunday Telegraph that in Baghdad intelligence is obtained in a variety of ways. Some of it comes through phone calls to a confidential hot-line where callers can either talk to a member of the JSG or arrange a meeting inside the "Green Zone". It is too dangerous for operators to meet agents at a secret rendezvous in other parts of the city.

With so many Iraqis entering the zone every day, those who want to pass on information can do so with a certain amount of anonymity. But a risk still remains. All potential agents are warned that anyone suspected of being a coalition spy will be tortured before being murdered. If he is married, his wife will be gang-raped in front of their children, who will in all probability also be murdered, they are

told. Despite the risks, JSG operators deal with dozens of Iraqis every week who are -prepared, for a variety of reasons, to become informers.

"Some Iraqis come to us because they are simply fed up with the violence," said one source. "They may have had -members of their families -murdered, tortured or kidnapped. Unlike much of the middle class which has already fled the country, they may be too poor to leave and so they come to us to see if they can make a difference.

"They may have a little bit of information or detailed knowledge of a planned attack. We also have to deal with terrorists and that presents us with a difficulty. We are happy for them to pass us information but it is made absolutely clear to them that as a member of a terrorist group they are criminals and they should cease all activity immediately - we have had cases where Shia or Sunni men have provided us with information and as part of the debriefing process we have discovered that they are terrorists themselves. We warn them that they are running the risk of being killed or captured and that they should get themselves into a position within the organisation where they will not be directly involved in murder."

To senior American officers in Baghdad, the JSG is playing a vital role in the most important theatre of the war on terror.

"In many respects, Afghanistan is a side issue and that is something the Americans understand better than British politicians," said a source. "Ask any senior officer in Baghdad, given a choice, which war would they be prepared to lose and they will say the war in Afghanistan.

"In many respects the war in Iraq has redefined insurgent warfare. Think of the very worst of Northern Ireland combined with the very worst of the Balkans and you are coming close to life on a daily basis in Baghdad. The situation is chaotic and bordering on being hopeless. The Iraqis have absolutely no faith in their army or police force because they are all or nearly all linked to militias.

"Only the coalition forces can bring real security - if the war is lost chaos will reign and the whole of the region will be dragged into a bloody and catastrophic ethnic war."

- **Rights group says Gov't protecting death squad members (30 Oct 2006)**

Source: IRIN

10/30/06 "Reuters" -- -- The Iraqi government must move quickly to prosecute all Ministry of Interior personnel responsible for "death squad" killings in Baghdad and elsewhere, the New-York based NGO Human Rights Watch (HRW) said on Saturday.

"Evidence suggests that Iraqi security forces are involved in these horrific crimes, and thus far the government has not held them accountable," said Sarah Leah Whitson, director of HRW's Middle East division. "The Iraqi government must stop giving protection to security forces responsible for abduction, torture and murder."

Sectarian violence between the majority Shi'ite Muslims and Sunni Muslims in Iraq has been steadily escalating since a revered Shi'ite shrine was bombed in the northern city of Samarra in February.

Since then, local and international sources say thousands of ordinary Iraqis have been killed and the UN's refugee agency (UNHCR) says some 365,000 people have been forced to flee their homes.

Brig. Abdul-Karim Khalaf, the Iraqi interior ministry's spokesman, said that the ministry and the Supreme Judicial Council have begun investigating all officers and employees suspected of collaborating in the ongoing sectarian violence.

"Those who committed crimes will be punished 100 percent and the ministry will not hesitate to punish anyone for any wrongdoing he did," Khalaf told IRIN.

Khalaf said that as part of the interior ministry's restructuring plan, which started in October, 3,000 policemen were fired on corruption or rights abuses charges. A total of 600 of the 3,000 personnel fired will face prosecution, according to Khalaf.

Khalaf added that the Shi'ite-dominated ministry also sacked two officers in charge of commando units that have been accused by Sunnis of running death squads that kill Sunnis.

On 15 October, Iraq's Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki, a Shi'ite Muslim, pledged in a nationally televised address to crack down on militias. "The state and the militias cannot coexist. Arms can only be in the hands of the government and no one has the right to be above the law," al-Maliki said.

However, analysts say that government rhetoric is not being matched by action. "He [al-Maliki] has

issued repeated statements against illegal armed groups, but he is not able to take any concerted action against these militias because of their political weight in his government," said Emad al-Janabi, a Baghdad-based political sciences professor at the University of Mosul.

"This increase in violence has put him at odds with the United States over his seeming unwillingness to crack down against the armed wings of his major political supporters," al-Janabi added.

Shi'ite militias - such as the al-Mahdi army and the Badr Brigade, the two most prominent - have links with religious members of the government, analysts say. As such, these militias are thought to have infiltrated the country's police force and are running death squads which roam Baghdad and nearby cities and towns snatching, torturing and killing Sunnis by the thousands.

In return, Sunni insurgent fighters have fought back viciously, as violence in the centre of Iraq has begun to resemble civil war.

- **Great Moments in the History of Imperialism (William Blum, 23 June 2006)**

By William Blum

06/23/06 "Information Clearing House" -- -- National Public Radio foreign correspondent Loren Jenkins, serving in NPR's Baghdad bureau, met earlier this month with a senior Shiite cleric, a man who was described in the NPR report as "a moderate" and as a person trying to lead his Shiite followers into practicing peace and reconciliation. He had been jailed by Saddam Hussein and forced into exile. Jenkins asked him: "What would you think if you had to go back to Saddam Hussein?" The cleric replied that he'd "rather see Iraq under Saddam Hussein than the way it is now."[1]

When one considers what the people of Iraq have experienced as a result of the American bombings, invasion, regime change, and occupation since 2003, should this attitude be surprising, even from such an individual? I was moved to compile a list of the many kinds of misfortune which have fallen upon the heads of the Iraqi people as a result of the American liberation of their homeland. It's depressing reading, and you may not want to read it all, but I think it's important to have it summarized in one place.

Loss of a functioning educational system. A 2005 UN study revealed that 84% of the higher education establishments have been "destroyed, damaged and robbed".

The intellectual stock has been further depleted as many thousands of academics and other professionals have fled abroad or have been mysteriously kidnapped or assassinated in Iraq; hundreds

of thousands, perhaps a million, other Iraqis, most of them from the vital, educated middle class, have left for Jordan, Syria or Egypt, many after receiving death threats. "Now I am isolated," said a middle-class Sunni Arab, who decided to leave. "I have no government. I have no protection from the government. Anyone can come to my house, take me, kill me and throw me in the trash."[2]

Loss of a functioning health care system. And loss of the public's health. Deadly infections including typhoid and tuberculosis are rampaging through the country. Iraq's network of hospitals and health centers, once admired throughout the Middle East, has been severely damaged by the war and looting.

The UN's World Food Program reported that 400,000 Iraqi children were suffering from "dangerous deficiencies of protein". Deaths from malnutrition and preventable diseases, particularly amongst children, already a problem because of the 12 years of US-imposed sanctions, have increased as poverty and disorder have made access to a proper diet and medicines ever more difficult.

Thousands of Iraqis have lost an arm or a leg, frequently from unexploded US cluster bombs, which became land mines; cluster bombs are a class of weapons denounced by human rights groups as a cruelly random scourge on civilians, particularly children.

Depleted uranium particles, from exploded US ordnance, float in the Iraqi air, to be breathed into human bodies and to radiate forever, and infect the water, the soil, the blood, the genes, producing malformed babies. During the few weeks of war in spring 2003, A10 "tankbuster" planes, which use munitions containing depleted uranium, fired 300,000 rounds.

And the use of napalm as well. And white phosphorous.

The American military has attacked hospitals to prevent them from giving out casualty figures of US attacks that contradicted official US figures, which the hospitals had been in the habit of doing.

Numerous homes have been broken into by US forces, the men taken away, the women humiliated, the children traumatized; on many occasions, the family has said that the American soldiers helped themselves to some of the family's money. Iraq has had to submit to a degrading national strip search.

Destruction and looting of the country's ancient heritage, perhaps the world's greatest archive of the human past, left unprotected by the US military, busy protecting oil facilities.

A nearly lawless society: Iraq's legal system, outside of the political sphere, was once one of the most impressive and secular in the Middle East; it is now a shambles; religious law more and more prevails.

Women's rights previously enjoyed are now in great and growing danger under harsh Islamic law, to one extent or another in various areas. There is today a Shiite religious ruling class in Iraq, which tolerates physical attacks on women for showing a bare arm or for picnicking with a male friend. Men can be harassed for wearing shorts in public, as can children playing outside in shorts.

Sex trafficking, virtually nonexistent previously, has become a serious issue.

Jews, Christians, and other non-Muslims have lost much of the security they had enjoyed in Saddam's secular society; many have emigrated.

A gulag of prisons run by the US and the new Iraqi government feature a wide variety of torture and abuse -- physical, psychological, emotional; painful, degrading, humiliating; leading to mental breakdown, death, suicide; a human-rights disaster area.

Over 50,000 Iraqis have been imprisoned by US forces since the invasion, but only a very tiny portion of them have been convicted of any crime.

US authorities have recruited members of Saddam Hussein's feared security service to expand intelligence gathering and root out the resistance.

Unemployment is estimated to be around fifty percent. Massive layoffs of hundreds of thousands of Baathist government workers and soldiers by the American occupation authority set the process in motion early on. Later, many, desperate for work, took positions tainted by a connection to the occupation, placing themselves in grave danger of being kidnapped or murdered.

The cost of living has skyrocketed. Income levels have plummeted.

The Kurds of Northern Iraq evict Arabs from their homes. Arabs evict Kurds in other parts of the country. Many people were evicted from their homes because they were Baathist. US troops took part in some of the evictions. They have also demolished homes in fits of rage over the killing of one of their buddies.

When US troops don't find who they're looking for, they take who's there; wives have been held until the husband turns himself in, a practice which Hollywood films stamped in the American mind as being a particular evil of the Nazis; it's also collective punishment of civilians and is forbidden under the Geneva Convention. Continual bombing assaults on neighborhoods has left an uncountable number of destroyed homes, workplaces, mosques, bridges, roads, and everything else that goes into the making of modern civilized life.

Hafitha, Fallujah, Samarra, Ramadi ... names that will live in infamy for the wanton destruction, murder, and assaults upon human beings and human rights carried out in those places by US forces.

The supply of safe drinking water, effective sewage disposal, and reliable electricity have all generally been below pre-invasion levels, producing constant hardship for the public, in temperatures reaching 115 degrees. To add to the misery, people wait all day in the heat to purchase gasoline, due in part to oil production, the country's chief source of revenue, being less than half its previous level.

The water and sewage system and other elements of the infrastructure had been purposely (sic) destroyed by US bombing in the first Gulf War of 1991. By 2003, the Iraqis had made great strides in repairing the most essential parts of it. Then came Washington's renewed bombing.

Civil war, death squads, kidnaping, car bombs, rape, each and every day ... Iraq has become the most dangerous place on earth. American soldiers and private security companies regularly kill people and leave the bodies lying in the street; US-trained Iraqi military and police forces kill even more, as does the insurgency. An entire new generation is growing up on violence and sectarian ethics; this will poison the Iraqi psyche for many years to come.

US intelligence and military police officers often free dangerous criminals in return for a promise to spy on insurgents.

Protesters of various kinds have been shot by US forces on several occasions

At various times, the US has killed, wounded and jailed reporters from Al Jazeera television, closed the station's office, and banned it from certain areas because occupation officials didn't like the news the station was reporting. Newspapers have been closed for what they have printed. The Pentagon has planted paid-for news articles in the Iraqi press to serve propaganda purposes.

But freedom has indeed reigned -- for the great multinationals to extract everything they can from Iraq's resources and labor without the hindrance of public interest laws, environmental regulations or worker protections. The orders of the day have been privatization, deregulation, and laissez faire for Halliburton and other Western corporations. Iraqi businesses have been almost entirely shut out though they are not without abilities, as reflected in the infrastructure rebuilding effort following the US bombing of 1991.

Yet, despite the fact that it would be difficult to name a single area of Iraqi life which has improved as a result of the American actions, when the subject is Iraq and the person I'm having a discussion with

has no other argument left to defend US policy there, at least at the moment, I may be asked:

"Just tell me one thing, are you glad that Saddam Hussein is out of power?"

And I say: "No".

And the person says: "No?"

And I say: "No. Tell me, if you went into surgery to correct a knee problem and the surgeon mistakenly amputated your entire leg, what would you think if someone then asked you: Are you glad that you no longer have a knee problem? The people of Iraq no longer have a Saddam problem." And many Iraqis actually supported him.

William Blum is the author of: Killing Hope: US Military and CIA Interventions Since World War 2

NOTES
[1] NPR, "Day to Day", June 6, 2006
[2] New York Times, May 19, 2006

- **Impunity, 09 June 2006**

“Successive imperialist powers have shown that the bottom line in combating the hopes and dreams of ordinary people is to resort to spreading terror through the application of extreme violence.” Max Fuller; “For Iraq, the ‘El Salvador Option’ becomes Reality”

By Mike Whitney

06/09/06 "**Information Clearing House**" **-- --** George Bush is right; Iraq is “the central battlefield in the global war on terror”. Regrettably, it is United States that is the main sponsor and supporter of that terror in the form of American-trained death squads. Death squad activity in Iraq now accounts for more than 1,000 casualties per month. The Baghdad morgue has become a conveyor-belt for American-generated carnage.

Up to now, the US involvement in the killing has been effectively concealed by the mainstream media. Apart from infrequent reports on the internet, there is little information connecting the burgeoning death toll to America’s counterinsurgency operations.

That changed on May 4, 2006 when Congressman Dennis Kucinich gave a speech on the floor of the House which linked the Bush administration to the death squad's in Iraq. Reading from a long list of newspaper articles he had compiled, Kucinich provided a detailed account of America's disturbing undercover war. Naturally, his speech was shunned by the major media and consigned to the memory hole. It outlines the extent of America's complicity in the ongoing slaughter and asks us to question whether any additional involvement can be morally justified.

Kucinich's speech was framed in the context of 2 letters which he delivered to Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld and President George Bush. His comments are entered below:

April 5, 2006

Dear Secretary Rumsfeld:

I am writing to request a copy of all records pertaining to Pentagon plans to use U.S. Special Forces to advise, support and train Iraqi assassination and kidnapping teams.

On January 8, 2005, Newsweek magazine first published a report that the Pentagon had a proposal to train elite Iraqi squads to quell the growing Sunni insurgency. The proposal has been called the "Salvador Option," which references the U.S. military assistance program, initiated under the Carter Administration and subsequently pursued by the Reagan Administration, that funded and supported "nationalist" paramilitary forces who hunted down and assassinated rebel leaders and their supporters in El Salvador. This program in El Salvador was highly controversial and received much public backlash in the U.S., as tens of thousands of innocent civilians were assassinated and "disappeared," including notable members of the Catholic Church, Archbishop Oscar Romero and the four American churchwomen. According to the Newsweek report, Pentagon conservatives wanted to resurrect the Salvadoran program in Iraq because they believed that despite the incredible cost in human lives and human rights, it was successful in eradicating guerrillas.

Mr. Secretary, at a news conference on January 11, 2005, you publicly stated that the idea of a Salvador option was "nonsense." Yet mounting evidence suggests that the U.S. has in fact funded and trained Iraqi assassination and kidnapping teams and these teams are now operating with horrific success across Iraq.

We know that the Pentagon received funding for training Iraqi paramilitaries. About one year before the Newsweek report on the "Salvador Option," it was reported in the American Prospect magazine on January 1, 2004 that part of $3 billion of the $87 billion Emergency Supplemental

Appropriations bill to fund operations in Iraq, signed into law on November 6, 2003, was designated for the creation of a paramilitary unit manned by militiamen associated with former Iraqi exile groups. According to the Prospect article, experts predicted that creation of this paramilitary unit would "lead to a wave of extrajudicial killings, not only of armed rebels but of nationalists, other opponents of the U.S. occupation and thousands of civilian Baathists." The article further described how the bulk of the $3 billion program, disguised as an Air Force classified program, would be used to "support U.S. efforts to create a lethal, and revenge-minded Iraqi security force." According to one of the article's sources, John Pike, an expert of classified military budgets at www.globalsecurity.org. "the big money would be for standing up an Iraqi secret police to liquidate the resistance."

We know that some of the Pentagon's Iraq experts were involved in the Reagan Administration's paramilitary program in El Salvador. Colonel James Steele, Counselor to the U.S. Ambassador for Iraqi Security Forces, formerly led the U.S. Military Advisory Group in El Salvador from 1984-1986, where he developed special operating forces at brigade level during the height of the conflict. The role of these forces in El Salvador was to attack "insurgent" leadership, their supporters, sources of supply, and base camps. Currently Colonel Steele has been assigned to work with the new elite Iraqi counter-insurgency unit known as the Special Police Commandos, operating under Iraq's Interior Ministry. Director of National Intelligence, John Negroponte, was U.S. Ambassador to Iraq from June 2004 to April 2005. From 1981 to 1985, he was ambassador to Honduras where he played a key role in coordinating U.S. covert aid to the Contras, anti-Sandinista militias who targeted civilians in Nicaragua. Additionally, he oversaw the U.S. backing of a military death squad in Honduras, Battalion 3-16, which specialized in torture and assassination. The U.S. had similar programs of supporting paramilitary groups set up Nicaragua and Honduras as its program in El Salvador. In a Democracy Now interview on January 10, 2005, Allan Nairn, who broke the story about U.S. support of death squads in El Salvador, suspected that Ambassador Negroponte would most likely be involved in the economic side of U.S. support to death squads in Iraq.

We know that a wave of abductions and executions, in the style of the death squads of El Salvador, and with ties to an official government sponsor, and to the U.S., has hit Iraq. News reports over the past 10 months strongly suggest that the U.S. has trained and supported highly organized Iraqi commando brigades, and that some of those brigades have operated as death squads, abducting and assassinating thousands of Iraqis. Some news highlights: • May 1, 2005 -- Los Angeles Times reports that the U.S. is providing technical and logistical support to the Maghawir (Fearless Warrior) brigades, the Interior Ministry's special commandos, according to Major General Rasheed Flayih Mohammed. Iraqi authorities plan to increase deployment of the 12,000-strong Maghawir (Fearless Warrior) brigades, which are composed of well-trained veterans who have worked closely with U.S. forces in Najaf, Fallujah and Mosul and include the Wolf, Scorpion, Tiger and Thunder brigades. • May 16-20, 2005 -- Los Angeles Times and New York Times reveal discovery of 46 bodies, all Iraqi

men abducted and slain execution-style, in various locations: floating in the Tigris, dumped in ditches and garbage-strewn lots, and buried at a poultry farm. • June 15, 2005 -- Washington Post reports that U.S. forces had knowledge of secret and illegal abductions of hundreds of minority Arabs in Kirkuk. The abductions were by forces led by Kurdish political parties and backed by the U.S. military. • June 20, 2005 -- Los Angeles Times reports that Saad Sultan, of Iraq Human Rights Ministry said that police and security forces attached to the Iraqi Interior Ministry, thousands of whom have been trained by American instructors, are responsible for abusing up to 60% of estimated 12,000 detainees in prison and military compounds. He says the units have used tactics reminiscent of Saddam's secret intelligence squads. • July 3, 2005 -- Reuters News reports that the government of Iraq publicly acknowledged that the new security forces were using torture. Article further says that accounts are common of people being seized by armed men in the uniforms of the police, army or special units like Baghdad's Wolf Brigade police commandos, and then disappearing without trace or being found dead. • July 28, 2005 -- Los Angeles Times reports that members of a California Army National Guard company, the Alpha Company, who were implicated in a detainee abuse scandal, trained and conducted joint operations with the Wolf Brigade, a commando unit criticized for human rights abuses. In an online Alpha Company newsletter, Captain Haviland wrote, "We have assigned 2nd Platoon to help them transition, and install some of our 'Killer Company' aggressive tactical spirit in them." The article further states that despite the Wolf Brigade's controversial reputation for human rights violations, it is regarded as the gold standard for Iraqi security forces by U.S. military officials. • August 31, 2005 -- BBC reports that on the night of August 24, a large force of the Volcano Brigade raided homes in Al-Hurriyah city in the Baghdad, kidnapping and then executing 76 citizens. The victims were all shot in the head after their hands and feet had been tied up. They suffered the harshest forms of torture, deformation and burning. • November 16, 2005 -- Reuters News reports the discovery of 173 malnourished men, some of whom were tortured, imprisoned in a secret jail run by Shi'ite militias tied to the Interior Ministry. • November 17, 2005 -- Newsday reports that in the past year, the U.S. military has helped build up Iraqi commandos under guidance from James Steele, a former Army Special Forces officer who led U.S. counterinsurgency efforts in El Salvador in the 1980s. The brigades built up over the past year include the Lion Brigade, Scorpion Brigade and Volcano Brigade. • February 15, 2006 -- Associated Press reports that the Interior Ministry has launched a probe into death squad allegations. • February 19, 2006 -- BBC reveals that morgues in Baghdad receive dozens of bodies picked up daily from rivers, sewage plants, waste burial sites, farms and desert areas. Most of the bodies are handcuffed and blindfolded civilians with a bullet or more in the forehead, indicating that they were executed. The handcuffs used on the victims are like those used by the Iraqi police. • February 26, 2006 -- The Independent reports that outgoing United Nations' human rights chief in Iraq, John Pace, revealed that hundreds of Iraqis are being tortured to death or summarily executed every month in Baghdad alone by the death squads working from the Ministry of Interior. He said that up to three-quarters of the corpses stacked in the Baghdad mortuary show evidence of gunshot wounds

to the head or injuries caused by drill-bits or burning cigarettes. • March 9, 2006 -- Los Angeles Times reports that Iraqi police officers who worked at the Interior Ministry's illegal prison had received American training, and that U.S. trainers have also given extensive support to 27 brigades of heavily armed commandos accused of a series of abuses, including the death of 14 Sunni Arabs who were locked in an airtight van last summer. • March 10, 2006 -- Sidney Morning Herald reports that men wearing the uniforms of U.S.-trained security forces, which are controlled by the Interior Ministry, abducted 50 people in a daylight raid on a security agency. Masked men who are driving what appear to be new government-owned vehicles are carrying out many of the raids. • March 27, 2006 -- The Independent reports that while U.S. authorities have begun criticizing the Iraqi government over the "death squads," many of the paramilitary groups accused of the abuse, such as the Wolf Brigade, the Scorpion Brigade and the Special Police Commandos were set up with the help of the American military. Furthermore, the militiamen were provided with U.S. advisers some of whom were veterans of Latin American counter-insurgency which also had led to allegations of death squads at the time.

Mr. Secretary, in light of this evidence of U.S. support for and the existence of death squads in Iraq, what is the basis for your January 11, 2005 statement, that the idea of a Salvador option in Iraq is "nonsense"? I request a copy of all records pertaining to Pentagon plans to use U.S. Special Forces to advise, support and train Iraqi assassination and kidnapping teams. I look forward to receiving your response.

Sincerely, Dennis J. Kucinich, Member of Congress

Kucinich's speech gives us a much better idea of what is really going on in Iraq. He exposes the US as the driving force behind the paramilitary units that are currently torturing and killing vast numbers of Iraqi civilians. The entire operation has been set into motion by American intelligence agencies with the intention of inciting sectarian violence and thrusting the country towards partition.

The appearance of Colonel James Steele, as counselor for the Iraqi Security Forces, should remove any doubt about the real nature of America's involvement. Steele's "stock and trade" is the "spreading terror through the application of extreme violence"; Max Fuller's apt description of US counterinsurgency campaigns in Latin America. Steele was clearly enlisted to train others in the techniques of guerilla warfare and spread mayhem throughout the country.

Kucinch's claims are particularly illuminating in relation to the recent killing of terror-mastermind Abu Musab al Zarqawi. Zarqawi was the Pentagon's "psy-ops invention" who was created to rationalize the steady deterioration of Iraqi society. By connecting the Bush administration to the death squads the entire foundation for the war on terror begins to crumble. As Kucinich points out, the main

proponent of terrorist activity in Iraq is the United States not Islamic extremists. American death squads are getting away with murder, and they are doing so with complete impunity.

- **Seen through a Syrian lens, 'unknown Americans' are provoking civil war in Iraq (Robert Fisk, 28 April 2006)**

Friday, 28 April 2006

In Syria, the world appears through a glass, darkly. As dark as the smoked windows of the car which takes me to a building on the western side of Damascus where a man I have known for 15 years - we shall call him a "security source", which is the name given by American correspondents to their own powerful intelligence officers - waits with his own ferocious narrative of disaster in Iraq and dangers in the Middle East.

His is a fearful portrait of an America trapped in the bloody sands of Iraq, desperately trying to provoke a civil war around Baghdad in order to reduce its own military casualties. It is a scenario in which Saddam Hussein remains Washington's best friend, in which Syria has struck at the Iraqi insurgents with a ruthlessness that the United States wilfully ignores. And in which Syria's Interior Minister, found shot dead in his office last year, committed suicide because of his own mental instability.

The Americans, my interlocutor suspected, are trying to provoke an Iraqi civil war so that Sunni Muslim insurgents spend their energies killing their Shia co-religionists rather than soldiers of the Western occupation forces. "I swear to you that we have very good information," my source says, finger stabbing the air in front of him. "One young Iraqi man told us that he was trained by the Americans as a policeman in Baghdad and he spent 70 per cent of his time learning to drive and 30 per cent in weapons training. They said to him: 'Come back in a week.' When he went back, they gave him a mobile phone and told him to drive into a crowded area near a mosque and phone them. He waited in the car but couldn't get the right mobile signal. So he got out of the car to where he received a better signal. Then his car blew up."

Impossible, I think to myself. But then I remember how many times Iraqis in Baghdad have told me similar stories. These reports are believed even if they seem unbelievable. And I know where much of the Syrian information is gleaned: from the tens of thousands of Shia Muslim pilgrims who come to pray at the Sayda Zeinab mosque outside Damascus. These men and women come from the slums of Baghdad, Hillah and Iskandariyah as well as the cities of Najaf and Basra. Sunnis from Fallujah and Ramadi also visit Damascus to see friends and relatives and talk freely of American tactics in Iraq.

"There was another man, trained by the Americans for the police. He too was given a mobile and told to drive to an area where there was a crowd - maybe a protest - and to call them and tell them what was happening. Again, his new mobile was not working. So he went to a landline phone and called the Americans and told them: 'Here I am, in the place you sent me and I can tell you what's happening here.' And at that moment there was a big explosion in his car."

Just who these "Americans" might be, my source did not say. In the anarchic and panic-stricken world of Iraq, there are many US groups - including countless outfits supposedly working for the American military and the new Western-backed Iraqi Interior Ministry - who operate outside any laws or rules. No one can account for the murder of 191 university teachers and professors since the 2003 invasion - nor the fact that more than 50 former Iraqi fighter-bomber pilots who attacked Iran in the 1980-88 Iran-Iraq war have been assassinated in their home towns in Iraq in the past three years.

Amid this chaos, a colleague of my source asked me, how could Syria be expected to lessen the number of attacks on Americans inside Iraq? "It was never safe, our border," he said. "During Saddam's time, criminals and Saddam's terrorists crossed our borders to attack our government. I built a wall of earth and sand along the border at that time. But three car bombs from Saddam's agents exploded in Damascus and Tartous- I was the one who captured the criminals responsible. But we couldn't stop them."

Now, he told me, the rampart running for hundreds of miles along Syria's border with Iraq had been heightened. "I have had barbed wire put on top and up to now we have caught 1,500 non-Syrian and non-Iraqi Arabs trying to cross and we have stopped 2,700 Syrians from crossing ... Our army is there - but the Iraqi army and the Americans are not there on the other side."

Behind these grave suspicions in Damascus lies the memory of Saddam's long friendship with the United States. "Our Hafez el-Assad [the former Syrian president who died in 2000] learnt that Saddam, in his early days, met with American officials 20 times in four weeks. This convinced Assad that, in his words, 'Saddam is with the Americans'. Saddam was the biggest helper of the Americans in the Middle East (when he attacked Iran in 1980) after the fall of the Shah. And he still is! After all, he brought the Americans to Iraq!"

So I turn to a story which is more distressing for my sources: the death by shooting of Brigadier General Ghazi Kenaan, former head of Syrian military intelligence in Lebanon - an awesomely powerful position - and Syrian Minister of Interior when his suicide was announced by the Damascus government last year.

Widespread rumours outside Syria suggested that Kenaan was suspected by UN investigators of involvement in the murder of the former Lebanese prime minister Rafik Hariri in a massive car bomb

in Beirut last year - and that he had been "suicided" by Syrian government agents to prevent him telling the truth.

Not so, insisted my original interlocutor. "General Ghazi was a man who believed he could give orders and anything he wanted would happen. Something happened that he could not reconcile - something that made him realise he was not all-powerful. On the day of his death, he went to his office at the Interior Ministry and then he left and went home for half an hour. Then he came back with a pistol. He left a message for his wife in which he said goodbye to her and asked her to look after their children and he said that what he was going to do was 'for the good of Syria'. Then he shot himself in the mouth."

Of Hariri's assassination, Syrian officials like to recall his relationship with the former Iraqi interim prime minister Iyad Alawi - a self-confessed former agent for the CIA and MI6 - and an alleged $20bn arms deal between the Russians and Saudi Arabia in which they claim Hariri was involved.

Hariri's Lebanese supporters continue to dismiss the Syrian argument on the grounds that Syria had identified Hariri as the joint author with his friend, French President Jacques Chirac, of the UN Security Council resolution which demanded the retreat of the Syrians from Lebanese territory.

But if the Syrians are understandably obsessed with the American occupation of Iraq, their long hatred for Saddam - something which they shared with most Iraqis - is still intact. When I asked my first "security" source what would happen to the former Iraqi dictator, he replied, banging his fist into his hand: "He will be killed. He will be killed. He will be killed."

- **Samara's black day .... لا سُـرّ نام سـُرّ ى, February 23, 2006**

The news about the contemptible bombing of Iraq's revered Shiite shrines in Samara is puzzling.

For while:

"The Interior Ministry said four men, one wearing a military uniform and three clad in black, entered the mosque and detonated two bombs, one of which collapsed the dome into a crumbly mess, leaving just traces of gold showing through the rubble.
Sunnis Hit After Shiite Shrine Blast, by Ziad Khalaf, Feb 22, 2006
And
"A police officer, who declined to give his name, said armed men, with at least one wearing a uniform, broke inside the shrine before sunrise and seized the five policemen responsible for guarding the site."

Blast damages Iraq Shia shrine February 22, 2006

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س‌فف‌ي ح‌ي‌ن ي‌ق‌ول‌ ال‌خ‌ب‌ر : "أب‌ن‌ ب‌ض‌ع‌ة ر‌ج‌ال‌، أح‌د‌ه‌م ي‌ر‌ت‌د‌ي‌ م‌ال‌ب‌س ع‌س‌ك‌ر‌ي‌ة، إق‌ت‌ح‌م‌وا ال‌ج‌ام‌ع ق‌ب‌ل‌ ش‌ر‌وق‌ ال‌ش‌م‌س وق‌ي‌د‌وا ال‌ش‌ر‌ط‌ة ال‌خ‌م‌س‌ة ال‌ذ‌ي‌ن‌ ك‌ان‌وا ب‌ح‌ر‌اس‌ت‌ه‌".

ف‌إ‌ن‌ ت‌ص‌ر‌ي‌ح‌ "وز‌ي‌ر‌ ال‌د‌اخ‌ل‌ي‌ة" ي‌ق‌ول‌ : -

س‌ب‌ع‌ة ال‌ث‌ال‌ث‌اء 21/ ش‌ب‌اط‌ ف‌ي‌ ال‌س‌اع‌ة ال‌س‌اب‌ع‌ة و‌خ‌م‌س‌ي‌ن‌ د‌ق‌ي‌ق‌ة أح‌د‌ه‌م ي‌ر‌ت‌د‌ي‌ م‌ال‌ب‌س ع‌س‌ك‌ر‌ي‌ة م‌ر‌ق‌ط‌ة و‌ش‌ال‌ث‌ ي‌ر‌ت‌د‌ون‌ ب‌د‌ل‌ات‌ د‌و‌س‌ ء‌ا‌د‌ و‌س‌ي‌ط‌ر‌ة‌ ع‌ل‌ى‌ ض‌ر‌ي‌ح‌ ال‌إ‌م‌ام‌ي‌ن‌ ع‌ل‌ي‌ ال‌ه‌اد‌ي‌ و‌ال‌ح‌س‌ن‌ ال‌ع‌س‌ك‌ر‌ي‌ ع‌ل‌ي‌ه‌م‌ا ال‌س‌لام‌ و‌ق‌ام‌ وا ب‌و‌ض‌ع‌ ع‌ب‌و‌ات‌ ن‌ا‌س‌ف‌ة‌ د‌اخ‌ل‌ ال‌ض‌ر‌ي‌ح‌ ي‌ن‌ ال‌م‌ق‌د‌س‌ي‌ن‌.-

و‌ف‌ي‌ ال‌س‌اع‌ة ال‌س‌اد‌س‌ة‌ و40 د‌ق‌ي‌ق‌ة‌ ص‌ب‌اح‌ ي‌و‌م‌ 22/ ش‌ب‌اط‌ ت‌م‌ ت‌ف‌ج‌ي‌ر‌ ال‌ع‌ب‌و‌ت‌ي‌ن‌ م‌م‌ا أد‌ى‌ إ‌ل‌ى‌ ه‌د‌م‌ ال‌ق‌ب‌ة‌ ب‌ش‌ك‌ل‌ ك‌ام‌ل‌ ج‌ز‌ء‌ م‌ن‌ ال‌ج‌د‌ار‌ ال‌ش‌م‌ال‌ي‌ ل‌ل‌ض‌ر‌ي‌ح‌ و‌ع‌ل‌ى‌ ال‌ف‌ور‌ ت‌ح‌ر‌ك‌ ق‌و‌ا‌ت‌ ال‌م‌غ‌او‌ي‌ر‌ ف‌ي‌ س‌ام‌ر‌ا‌ء‌ إ‌ل‌ى‌ م‌ح‌ل‌ ال‌ح‌ادث‌ و‌ت‌م‌ت‌ ال‌س‌ي‌ط‌ر‌ة‌ ع‌ل‌ى‌ ال‌م‌و‌ق‌ع‌.ف‌و‌ت‌و‌ د‌و‌ز‌ا‌ر‌ة‌ ال‌د‌اخ‌ل‌ي‌ة‌ أ‌ن‌ ت‌ب‌ي‌ن‌ أ‌ن‌ ق‌و‌ة‌ ح‌ر‌ا‌س‌ة‌ ال‌ض‌ر‌ي‌ح‌ ت‌ب‌ل‌غ‌ 35 ع‌ن‌ص‌ر‌ م‌ن‌ ق‌و‌ة‌ ح‌ر‌ا‌س‌ة‌ ال‌م‌ن‌ش‌آ‌ت‌".

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ه‌ل‌ ال‌ح‌ظ‌ت‌م‌ ال‌غ‌ر‌ا‌ب‌ة؟ ت‌ر‌د‌د‌ت‌ ف‌ي‌ ن‌ش‌ر‌ ه‌ذ‌ا‌ ال‌ت‌ن‌اق‌ض‌ ر‌ي‌ث‌م‌ا ن‌ت‌ي‌ق‌ّن‌ م‌ن‌ خ‌ب‌ر‌ "وز‌ي‌ر‌ ال‌د‌اخ‌ل‌ي‌ة" ال‌ف‌ط‌ح‌ل‌.-

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Yet,

The Interior Minister has issued a statement (In Arabic) stating that "the terrorist unit controlled the shrine on Tuesday night, February 21, 2006 at 7:55 p.m. (local time)" but that "the two bombs exploded on Wednesday morning, February 22 at 6:40 a.m." while stating that "the shrine is guarded by 35 police guards". We await confirmation of the Interior Minister's statement.

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ت‌ح‌د‌ي‌ث‌:-

ت‌ف‌ا‌ص‌ي‌ل‌ ال‌م‌س‌اج‌د‌ ال‌ت‌ي‌ ا‌ح‌ت‌ل‌ت‌ ت‌ب‌ّر‌ي‌ و‌خ‌ُر‌ّب‌ت‌ و‌ف‌ُج‌ّر‌ت‌ ك‌ه‌ن‌ة‌ ا‌و‌ ن‌ا‌ق‌ة‌



AP ق‌ا‌ل‌ ع‌ق‌و‌م‌ ه‌ذ‌ه‌ ال‌ع‌ر‌ا‌ق‌ي‌ة‌ ر‌د‌و‌د‌

-22 ش‌ب‌اط‌ 2006

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.- يالتالي كان تصريح "وزير الداخلية" حول التقارير الصحفية التي تتهم عناصر من وحدات الشرطة الخاصة بالتورط في عمليات القتل الطائفي، ردت أيضاً بتأكيد من مصادر أمنية عراقية رفيعة المستوى لوكالة الأنباء الفرنسية.

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[جثث 17 رجلا تظهر في مشرحة بغداد بعد اختفائهم من منطقة يسيطر عليها الشرطة الخاصة]

22- فبراير 2006

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[جثث 17 رجلا تظهر في مشرحة بغداد بعد اختفائهم من منطقة يسيطر عليها الشرطة الخاصة]

23- فبراير 2006

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[جثث 17 رجلا تظهر في مشرحة بغداد بعد اختفائهم من منطقة يسيطر عليها الشرطة الخاصة]

23- فبراير 2006

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.- هذا وسنقوم بنشر، في وقت لاحق، شهادات أخرى من شهود عيان عبر البريد الإلكتروني.

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و ، (أي آي أس) الوكالة المركزية للمخابرات الأمريكية عن (التقرير الذي أعدته وكالة الاستخبارات الدفاعية الأمريكية) موثقة أخبار تقارير وثائق من تحتوي التي الأولى المرة هذه تكون لن. بتدريب قامت التي "القوات" أن من الرغم على ، قصاص فرق بتشكيل الأمريكية المتحدة الولايات قامت لقد. الإرهاب مكافحة وحدات بتدريب





And speaking of 'aid', as in USAID (do take a look at this site)

"... amid pleas for aid after Hurricane Katrina, the Bush administration has launched an unusual effort to raise charitable contributions for another cause: the government's attempt to rebuild Iraq.
Although more than $30 billion in taxpayer funds have been appropriated for Iraqi reconstruction, the administration earlier this month launched an Internet-based fundraising effort that it says is aimed at giving Americans "a further stake in building a free and prosperous Iraq."
Contributors have no way of knowing who's getting the money or precisely where it's headed because the government says it must keep the details secret for security reasons." (emphasis added)
New twist on aid for Iraq: U.S. seeks donations September 18, 2005

(An Update on the above:

"An extraordinary appeal to Americans from the Bush administration for money to help pay for the reconstruction of Iraq has raised only $600 (£337), The Observer has learnt. Yet since the appeal was launched earlier this month, donations to rebuild New Orleans have attracted hundreds of millions of dollars. "

Bush plea for cash to rebuild Iraq raises $600 September 25, 2005**)**

"must keep the details secret for security reasons"? .... Perhaps to 'aid' the British 'aid'?

See this site's previous post on this matter : **Yet another instance of an American 'terrorist act' in Iraq ... من وضع القنبلة في مطار (بغداد) الحاج حيدر؟**

Updates:

- "The main thing about Covert Action is that it must be deniable. There is a term called “plausible deniability”. When a government authorizes a covert action operation, the operation must be done in such a way that the government can claim that it knows nothing about it; in other words, the operation must not be attributable to the government that authorized it.

Covert Action operations are often Disinformation Operations, which are conducted in such a way as to discredit the opposition or the enemy. This is done, for example, by doing a violent action, such as a bombing, but making it look like the forces of another country or group did it. Such operations are sometimes called False-Flag Operations, meaning that the operation is conducted to make it look like it was done by people serving under another flag, preferably the enemy's flag. If the operation succeeds as designed, people will blame the action on the wrong party (the enemy). Thus, public opinion will be won over to the side that actually did the killing. Such false-flag, covert action operations are often referred to as Dirty Tricks.

.... So, who is behind many of the bombings against the Shi'ia and Sunni populations? It is quite possible, even probable, that many of them are being carried out by American, British, and even Israeli Covert Action operatives."

What is Covert Action? September 21, 2005

- **"We learned quickly" .... Rumsfeld had already, many times, claimed that non-distinction. Keep fooling yourself. August 24, 2005**

"I guess we were kind of naive when we first got here," said Sgt. 1st Class John Freeman, of Marion, N.C., who was put in charge of detainee operations at Bucca. "It was like, 'Hey, they're inside a fence. They don't have anything they can hurt us with.' We learned quickly."

... A former detainee, Challoub, known as Abu Hala, was a burly, bearded 45-year-old Mahdi Army commander detained in August during pitched fighting with U.S. forces in Sadr City, a Shiite slum in

eastern Baghdad. In Bucca, he was second in command at Compound 3.
On that April morning, he said he watched as American guards tried to remove 10 prisoners from the courtyard, among them four clerics who made up the Shiite compound's leadership. The guards put the men on the ground, cuffed their hands behind them and, he said, put their boots on the clerics' backs."As a Muslim, when you see your teacher treated like that, of course, you will get angry. As a Shiite, you should respect the cleric," said Challoub, who was released last month and returned to Baghdad. "That's when the chaos started."
... Suddenly, everything the Americans had provided the inmates over the previous months was turned against them, according to guards and a videotape of the riot made available by the military. The cinderblock had been chiseled from the concrete base of a tent pole; hundreds of pieces had been stored inside a tent the inmates used as a mosque that the military designated off limits to the guards. The detainees used floorboards as shields. They hurled socks filled with a cocktail of feces, dirt and flammable, slow-burning hand sanitizer, the Americans said. One of the crude devices ignited a Polaris all-terrain vehicle.
... "The violence, it was just absolutely incredible," said 1st Lt. Shawn Talmadge, a fire engine salesman from Richmond. "The sheer volume of rocks and the accuracy of them throwing the rocks -- it was just a full-out battle."Talmadge said he had an epiphany. "I realized, these guys have been fighting riots and wars a lot longer than we have. These guys have been fighting this way for hundreds of years."
In Iraq Jail, Resistance Goes Underground August 24, 2005

""Their most prominent leaders are not Iraqis, they are not Ho Chi Minh's with a nationalist base, but in the case of **Zarqawi** a Jordanian murderer," Rumsfeld said.
"And their massacres of innocents have outraged most Iraqis, rather than attracting broad support. Indeed, polls indicate that the anger against the terrorists and the insurgents is growing."
Rumsfeld said that while the specter of civil war should draw attention and concern, "I haven't seen anything to indicate that the risk is greater today than it was yesterday or the day before."
Rumsfeld: Iraq not fated to civil war August 23, 2005

The 'massacres of the innocents' have indeed outraged many Iraqis for it is slowly sinking in that these 'acts' are not perpetrated by the Iraqi Resistance but by an assortment of :
- Allawi's CIA trained 'Wolf Brigades' under the CIA-paid Shahwani , head of the 'Iraqi intelligence agency' and his Langley CIA-trained 'Iraqi' mercenaries,
- With their insidious 'operative head' CIA agent James Steel of the 'Salvador Option' assignment,
- The Shi'ite's Badir Brigades
- As well as by the below-the-radar Israeli Mossad (article in Arabic) **killing teams.**
An Update:

- And, last but not least, Militias of Iran's Secret War for Iraq (English) and (Arabic) .

In the meantime, do Rumsfeld's metrics extrapolate only to 'yesterday or the day before'? Six months ago, he was so cock-sure of how unsure he is:

"What you need to do is have the economic progress, the political progress which is going forward in such good style (sic) . And that will determine the level of the insurgency," Rumsfeld said.
"And the level of the insurgency will determine the speed at which Iraqi security forces will be capable of managing that level of insurgency."
He acknowledged there were are lot of "ifs," but added, "That's life."
... "We don't have intelligence that good. I just don't know ," Rumsfeld said."
Rumsfeld Says No Iraq Self-Security Date February 6, 2005

Though he knows this, for sure:

""The United States is not losing the global war against terrorism, nor are we losing the war in Afghanistan or Iraq," he said. Railing against violent extremists, he added, "They are what's wrong with the world." **Rumsfeld: U.S. Won't Lose in Iraq** August 30, 2005

Now that is a steep, downward, *learning* curve, eh?

Meanwhile, back to Bucca Prison where they do not need Hollywood movies, for it comes instinctively from a heroic people:

"Unusual US and British troop movements were observed in the city of al-Basrah on Tuesday morning as the soldiers encircled a section of the city and launched a wave of arrests in the ash-Shalamijah area to the east of the city.
The Mafkarat al-Islam correspondent in the city reported a source in the puppet “Iraqi rapid deployment force” as saying that the reason for the raids and arrests was that five Iraqi prisoners in nearby Camp Bucca in Umm Qasr had escaped on Monday night with the help of a trash man working with the prisoners.
The worker took the five prisoners out of the prison in his garbage truck, the source said.The prisoners escaped in the garbage truck when a Resistance rocket attack struck Camp Bucca, distracting the guard at the gate who neglected to search the garbage trucks that were leaving the camp, something that is normally done with each truck."
Garbage man helps five prisoners escape Camp Bucca Monday night. August 23, 2005

One result of thirteen years of economic sanctions and two and a half years of a horrid

occupation by the Ugly American; coming to an end soon.



posted by Imad Khadduri

- **CIA terrorism in Iraq ..... Who? US?, June 1, 2005**

This is from a January 1, 2004 article:

"With the 2004 electoral clock ticking amid growing public concern about U.S. casualties and chaos in Iraq, the Bush administration's hawks are upping the ante militarily. To those familiar with the CIA's Phoenix assassination program in Vietnam, Latin America's death squads or Israel's official policy of targeted murders of Palestinian activists, the results are likely to look chillingly familiar.
The Prospect has learned that part of a secret $3 billion in new funds—tucked away in the $87 billion Iraq appropriation that Congress approved in early November—will go toward **the creation of a paramilitary unit manned by militiamen associated with former Iraqi exile groups. Experts say it could lead to a wave of extrajudicial killings, not only of armed rebels but of nationalists, other opponents of the U.S. occupation and thousands of civilian Baathists** (emphasis added)—up to 120,000 of the estimated 2.5 million former Baath Party members in Iraq.
"They're clearly cooking up joint teams to do Phoenix-like things, like they did in Vietnam," says Vincent Cannistraro, former CIA chief of counter terrorism. Ironically, he says, the U.S. forces in Iraq are working with key members of Saddam Hussein's now-defunct intelligence agency to set the program in motion. "They're setting up little teams of Seals and Special Forces with teams of Iraqis, working with people who were former senior Iraqi intelligence people, to do these things," Cannistraro says."
Phoenix Rising January 1, 2004

Several previous posting on this site have pointed to some of the results of the above mentioned 'planning' and 'funding':

"There is no better way to start a civil war" May 28, 2005
"Yet everyone but the comatose American populace ... can see it" May 26, 2005
Yet another instance of an American 'terrorist act' in Iraq May 23, 2005
"Combat terrorism" by causing it May 16, 2005
Lest we forget "Operation Iraqi Freedom" May 10, 2005
Getting to Know the General May 2, 2005
The "Salvador option", with dressings, is being served in Iraq April 22, 2005

and documented corruption: The Demise of CIA Shadow Director in Iraq April 2, 2005

General Adnan Thabit, center, and his American CIA adviser, James Steele, at a meeting with local sheiks near Samarra.



posted by Imad Khadduri

- **"Combat terrorism" by causing it, May 16, 2005**

"A few days ago, an American manned check point confiscated the driver license of a driver and told him to report to an American military camp near Baghdad airport for interrogation and in order to retrieve his license. The next day, the driver did visit the camp and he was allowed in the camp with his car. He was admitted to a room for an interrogation that lasted half an hour. At the end of the session, the American interrogator told him: 'OK, there is nothing against you, but you do know that Iraq is now sovereign and is in charge of its own affairs. Hence, we have forwarded your papers and license to al-Kadhimia police station for processing. Therefore, go there with this clearance to reclaim your license. At the police station, ask for Lt. Hussain Mohammed who is waiting for you now. Go there now quickly, before he leaves his shift work".

The driver did leave in a hurry, but was soon alarmed with a feeling that his car was driving as if carrying a heavy load, and he also became suspicious of a low flying helicopter that kept hovering overhead, as if trailing him. He stopped the car and inspected it carefully. He found nearly 100 kilograms of explosives hidden in the back seat and along the two back doors.

The only feasible explanation for this incidence is that the car was indeed booby trapped by the Americans and intended for the al-Khadimiya Shiite district of Baghdad. The helicopter was monitoring his movement and witnessing the anticipated “hideous attack by foreign elements”.

The same scenario was repeated in Mosul, in the north of Iraq. A car was confiscated along with the driver’s license. He did follow up on the matter and finally reclaimed his car but was told to go to a police station to reclaim his license. Fortunately for him, the car broke down on the way to the police station. The inspecting car mechanic discovered that the spare tire was fully laden with explosives."
A warning to car drivers (in Arabic) May 11, 2005
And a Resistance warning to this effect May 14, 2005

A perhaps unrelated incident, but the circumstances are strangely similar.

"A Canadian man who was killed in Iraq last week – possibly by U.S. troops – lived near Toronto for years and also held Iraqi citizenship, the CBC has learned.
Some media cited unidentified sources who said he may have died after U.S. forces "tracked" a target, using a helicopter gunship, but Foreign Affairs said it's still investigating conflicting reports of the death.
U.S. officials have denied any involvement.
Canada's Department of Foreign Affairs will only say assigning blame is premature. It's still trying to get a complete picture of what happened from authorities in Baghdad."
Canadian killed in Iraq was Toronto-area trucker April 28, 2005

They are still trying to 'get the complete picture', remotely, sitting in Amman, Jordan. May I humbly suggest they go check his car? (Kindly see PS below)

“... According to a classified document prepared for Rumsfeld by his Defense Science Board, the new organization--the "Proactive, Preemptive Operations Group (P2OG)"--would actually carry out secret missions designed to provoke terrorist groups into committing violent acts. The P2OG, a 100-member, so-called "counter-terrorist" organization with a $100-million-a-year budget, would ostensibly target "terrorist leaders," but according to P2OG documents procured by Arkin, would in fact carry out missions designed to "stimulate reactions" among "terrorist groups"--which, according to the Defense Secretary's logic, would subsequently expose them to "counter-attack" by the good guys. In other

words, the plan is to execute secret military operations (assassinations, sabotage, "deception") which would intentionally result in terrorist attacks on innocent people, including Americans--essentially, to "combat terrorism" by causing it!

This notion is currently being applied to the problem of the Iraqi "insurgency," it seems. According to a May 1, 2005 report by Peter Maass in the New York Times Magazine, two of the top US advisers to Iraqi paramilitary commandos fighting the insurgents are veterans of US counterinsurgency operations in Latin America. Loaning credence to recent media speculation about the "Salvadorization" of Iraq, the report notes that one adviser currently in Iraq is James Steele (mentioned previously on this site), who led a team of 55 US Army Special Forces advisers in El Salvador in the 1980s. Maass writes that these advisors "trained front-line battalions that were accused of significant human rights abuses."

The Provocateur State - Is the CIA Behind the Iraqi "Insurgents"--and Global Terrorism?

May 10, 2005

Sweet Condi donned a bullet proof vest and a combat helmet to visit Liberated Iraq



PS

While on the subject of American helicopters:

"In a new American attack on the Iraqi civilian population, a US helicopter gunship opened fire on two civilian cars, each carrying a family, in the Dumiz neighborhood of Mosul.

A statement issued by the Information Bureau of the Board of Muslim 'Ulama' [Scholars], the highest Sunni religious authority in occupied Iraq, a copy of which was obtained by Mafkarat al-Islam, said that the American attack killed the driver of one of the two cars along with all the members of his family except his aged mother who survived with burns.

In the other car, all the members of that family were also killed except for a little five-year-old girl. The little girl survived the initial attack and tried to crawl out the back of the car. Some earnest people who happened to be on the scene rushed to try to rescue the girl but American troops who witnessed

the crime committed by their helicopter thought only to outdo the fliers and opened fire on the rescuers and the little girl, killing all of them.
The US invader troops were thus able to relish the scene of the terrified little girl engulfed in flames before her death and afterwards they had the opportunity to survey the scene of their bloody "combined forces" massacre that left body parts of innocent people scattered everywhere."
Mosul May 15, 2005

"She stood in the crowded room as her drove of minions stood around her.....A huddling mass trying to draw closer to her aura of evil. The lights flashed against her fangs as her cruel lips curled into a grimace. It was meant to be a smile but it wouldn't reach her cold, lifeless eyes... It was a leer- the leer of the undead before a feeding...
The above was not a scene from Buffy the Vampire Slayer- it was just Condi Rice in Iraq a day ago. At home, we fondly refer to her as The Vampire. She's such a contrast to Bush- he simply looks stupid. She, on the other hand, looks utterly evil."
The Dead and the Undead... May 18, 2005

posted by Imad Khadduri

- **Is the CIA Behind the Iraqi "Insurgents"—and Global Terrorism? (10 May 2005)**

THE PROVOCATEUR STATE

Is the CIA Behind the Iraqi "Insurgents"—and Global Terrorism?

by Frank Morales

The requirement of an ever-escalating level of social violence to meet the political and economic needs of the insatiable "anti-terrorist complex" is the essence of the new US militarism. What is now openly billed as "permanent war" ultimately serves the geo-political ends of social control in the interests of US corporate domination, much as the anti-communist crusade of the now-exhasuted Cold War did.

Back in 2002, following the trauma of 9-11, Secretary of Defense Donald H. Rumsfeld predicted there would be more terrorist attacks against the American people and civilization at large. How could he be so sure of that? Perhaps because these attacks would be instigated on the order of the Honorable Mr. Rumsfeld. According to Los Angeles Times military analyst William Arkin, writing Oct. 27, 2002, Rumsfeld set out to create a secret army, "a super-Intelligence Support Activity" network that would "bring together CIA and military covert action, information warfare, intelligence, and cover and deception," to stir the pot of spiraling global violence.

According to a classified document prepared for Rumsfeld by his Defense Science Board, the new organization--the "Proactive, Preemptive Operations Group (P2OG)"--would actually carry out secret missions designed to provoke terrorist groups into committing violent acts. The P2OG, a 100-member, so-called "counter-terrorist" organization with a $100-million-a-year budget, would ostensibly target "terrorist leaders," but according to P2OG documents procured by Arkin, would in fact carry out missions designed to "stimulate reactions" among "terrorist groups"--which, according to the Defense Secretary's logic, would subsequently expose them to "counter-attack" by the good guys. In other words, the plan is to execute secret military operations (assassinations, sabotage, "deception") which would intentionally result in terrorist attacks on innocent people, including Americans--essentially, to "combat terrorism" by causing it!

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The current senior US adviser at the Iraqi Interior Ministry, which Maass writes "has operational control over the commandos," is former top US Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) official Steve Casteel, who worked "alongside local forces" in the US-sponsored "Drug War" in Bolivia, Peru and Colombia, "where he was involved in the hunt for Pablo Escobar, the head of the Medellin cocaine cartel."

The US "drug war" in Latin America also serves as a cover for ongoing counterinsurgency, employing terrorist methods to achieve two aims: one, actually combating genuine insurgency; two, the ratcheting up of a "strategy of tension," heightened social violence designed to induce fear among the citizenry and the subsequent call for greater "security."

This was the essence, for example, of Operation Gladio, a decades-long covert campaign of provocateur-style terrorism and deceit. The ostensible purpose of Gladio, officially launched as a covert NATO program in 1952, was to establish a clandestine network of "stay-behind" teams which would organize armed resistance and sabotage in the event of a Soviet invasion of Western Europe. But the network actually took a far more proactive role. Directed by US/NATO intelligence services of the West against their own populations, Operation Gladio led to possibly hundreds of innocent people being killed or maimed in "terrorist" attacks which were then blamed on "leftist subversives" or other political opponents. The most notorious such attack was the 1980 bombing of the train station at Bologna, which left 85 dead. Initially blamed on left-wing radicals, the blast was revealed upon

investigation to be the work of an ultra-right network linked to the Italy's Gladio team; four Italian neo-fascists were eventually convicted of the crime.

The purpose was again twofold: to demonize designated enemies (the "communists") and to frighten the public into supporting ever-increasing powers for the national security state. It appears the Pentagon has been implementing Gladio-style operations for quite some time--possibly including 9-11. A stretch? Maybe not.

Witness the US Joint Chiefs discussion of "Operation Northwoods" back in 1962, a plan to blow up U.S. "assets"--including U.S. citizens--in order to justify an invasion of Cuba. Later, US Army Field Manual 30-31B, entitled "Stability Operations Intelligence - Special Fields," dated March 18, 1970 and signed by Gen. William C Westmoreland, promoted terrorist attacks (and the planting of false evidence) in public places which were then to be blamed on "communists" and "socialists." It called for the execution of terrorist attacks throughout Western Europe, carried out through a network of covert US/NATO armies, in order to convince European governments of "the communist threat."

What's striking is that during this period the primary source for US government info on the Russian "threat" was coming from the Gehlen Organiation, Hitlers eastern front intelligence apparatus, which in the aftermath of World War II had cut a deal with the CIA's Allen Dulles and worked out of Fort Hunt, just outside Washington DC, before being relocated back to Munich. Headed up by super-spy Nazi General Reinhard Gehlen, the Org's "special operations" expertise was heeded, financed and well-protected by U.S. tax dollars well into the 1970's. Could the Gehlen Org have had an influence in the production of FM 30-31B?

According to FM 30-31B, "there may be times when Host Country Governments show passivity or indecision in the face of communist subversion and according to the interpretation of the US secret services do not react with sufficient effectiveness. Most often such situations come about when the revolutionaries temporarily renounce the use of force and thus hope to gain an advantage, as the leaders of the host country wrongly consider the situation to be secure. US army intelligence must have the means of launching special operations which will convince Host Country Governments and public opinion of the reality of the insurgent danger."

The U.S. Army now claims the document was a Russian forgery. Journalist Allan Francovich in his BBC documentation on Gladio and US/NATO "special operations" terrorism, asked Ray Cline, CIA deputy director from 1962 to 1966, if he believed FM 30-31B was for real and he replied: "Well, I suspect it is an authentic document. I don't doubt it. I never saw it but it's the kind of special forces military operations that are described," to be implemented at the discretion of the president and Defense Department on the "appropriate occasion."



It could be that in Iraq--and elsewhere around the world--the "appropriate occasion" has arrived. Bush's war on terrorism could be the ultimate manifestation of the provocateur state; carrying out of clandestine "executive actions" and "special operations" directed against populations, including our own, who are truly ignorant of the real "enemy" in the face of the ever-present manufactured one, traumatized by strategic terror designed to engender fear and acquiescence to further "security measures"--thereby enriching the military, police agencies, and munitions and nuclear business enterprises.

RESOURCES:

Peter Maass, "The Salvadorization of Iraq?," New York Times Magazine, May 1, 2005.

A.K. Gupta, "Unraveling Iraq's Secret Militias," Z Magazine, May 2005

Lila Rajiva, "The Pentagon's 'NATO Option'," CommonDreams, Feb. 10, 2005.

Statewatch Briefing on Operation Gladio

US Joint Chiefs of Staff, "Operation Northwoods", 1962
National Security Archives on Operation Northwoods
US Army, Field Manual 30-31B, 1970
FM 30-31B excerpts from Cryptome.org

WW4 REPORT #58 on P2OG

Frank Morales, "John Negroponte and the Death Squad Connection," WW4 REPORT #108

- **Getting to Know the General, May 2, 2005**

This is an opinion, worthy of reading, of a very close Iraqi friend (since high school):

"I think that anyone truly interested in freedom and democracy for the Iraqi people should carefully read the following good article and absorb its implications. It elucidates the real reason for Rumsfeld's

recent visit to Iraq. He wanted to ensure that these 'elements' are not removed by the new government in Baghdad.

The new emerging Iraq is a composite of:
1. Saddamist core of the American-supported fighting force that is the foundation of the 'new' Iraqi army whose primary mission is to 'fight the insurgency' and to protect the political organs established by the US.
2. A 'Lebanon' style political structure that is led principally by 'expat' politicians. These leaders, in spite of serious political differences among themselves, are committed to a very long-time US presence in Iraq; and on mass privatization of Iraq national assets, whether it makes economic sense or not.
3. An economic structure that is based on these war barons intending to owning every thing in Iraq including oil, water, and land.
4. A political process that is based on show elections that produce political organs that is supposed to do many things but resolve the real challenges: economic hardships of the people of Iraq; the return of sovereignty to Iraq; demand removal of foreign presence and control; or, bring social and political harmony to enable the Iraqi people to determine their future.

In spite of the tons of talk about 'freedom' and 'democracy', the new Iraq is being reconstituted to be as repressive as the 'old' Iraq; and with even more corrupt political leadership."
S. Al-B.

The Way of the Commandos May 1, 2005

An Update: **Iraqi commando battalion pulled out of Samarra** May 5, 2005

- **The "Salvador option", with dressings, is being served in Iraq, April 22, 2005**

First, have the "Salvador option" :

"In devising a strategy to defeat Iraq's insurgents, the Pentagon may be gaining the upper hand but at the cost of pushing Iraq toward civil war. A report by the Wall Street Journal from Feb. 16 revealed

that “pop-up militias” are proliferating in Iraq. Not only is the U.S. aware of these illegal militias, but the Pentagon is arming, training and funding them for use them in counter-insurgency operations. Most disturbing, one militia in particular – the “special police commandos” – is being used throughout Iraq and has been singled out by a U.S. general as conducting death squad strikes known as the “Salvador option.”

Greg Jaffe, the Journal reporter, identified at least six such militias. Yet these militias owe their allegiance not to the Iraqi people or state, but to their self-appointed leaders and associated politicians such as interim Prime Minister Iyad Allawi. Even the commander of U.S. forces in the Middle East, Gen. John P. Abizaid, admitted to Congress on March 1 that such militias are “destabilizing.”
Of these militias, at least three are linked to Allawi. Jaffe writes, “First came the Muthana Brigade, a unit formed by the order of ... Allawi.” The second is the Defenders of Khadamiya, referring to a Shiite shrine on the outskirts of Baghdad, which appears to be “closely aligned with prominent Shiite cleric Hussein al Sadr,” who ran on Allawi’s ticket in the January elections.
"Let A Thousand Militias Bloom" April 21, 2005

“... The U.S. is saying, like, well, these are a bunch of Ba'athist dead-enders in the insurgency, but at the same time they're using the ex-Ba'athists themselves, who they said they were freeing Iraq from, to hunt down insurgents. But they are also just rounding people up willy-nilly, and there appears, like I said, to be extensive use of torture, much of it coming from this TV show that is now appearing on Iraq called, Terror: The Grip of Justice. There have been many accounts of this in the media, where a number of times a week on this television station set up by the Pentagon, Al-Iraqiya, they parade insurgents before the TV. And these reports are all noting that the suspects have swollen faces, bruised, that they're very cowed. And they're also admitting to the most absurd charges, that they are participating in gay orgies, that they get drunk inside mosques, that they're pedophiles engaging in rape, that they practice beheadings by cutting off the head of sheep. And the interesting thing is, one commentator noted, it's the exact same tactic Saddam Hussein used under his government of airing televised confessions.

And there’s one Ba'athist in particular who is at very much the center of this. It's a General Adnan Thavit, who was involved in the 1996 coup against Saddam Hussein that the former interim prime minister who just resigned, Iyad Allawi, headed up. And this character Thavit keeps popping up all over the place. He is the head of the special police commandos, which are said to number ten to eleven thousand, which would actually make them the second largest security force in Iraq, larger than the British. He was also the source for this raid a few weeks ago on this insurgent camp on Lake Tharthar, that turned out to be bogus pretty much. A reporter went there and found that there were all these insurgents still there, even though Thavit was saying something like 85 insurgents were killed. He is also now involved in this dispute over what's going on in this town south of Baghdad, claiming there

wasn't any kidnapping and now there's reports of these bodies being dragged out of the river. And the Interior Ministry a couple of days ago even said he was assassinated, and then retracted the report the same day. He is a very shady character, and the U.S. general staff under Petraeus notes that he's very powerful, and that if he is removed, he could take his militias with him, this huge force. And right now, there's a power struggle going on. Donald Rumsfeld flew into Baghdad last week and warned the new government not to purge these Ba'athists. This largely escaped the notice of many in the media. And Talabani, who is the new president, has said that, no, we are going to purge them, and we want to use our militias."

U.S. Funding Iraqi Militias Led by Baathists As Part of Counter-Insurgency Operation
April 21, 2005

The preparations for these 'militias' have been long ongoing:

"The Iraqi authorities, with the help of American intelligence agencies, are creating an intelligence service here that will focus on rooting out guerrilla fighters, especially those from outside the country, Iraqi and American officials said Friday. The service will employ some former agents of Saddam Hussein's security apparatus and will probably receive financing from the American government, the officials said.

Many of the agents will work in the border towns of Iraq to identify foreign fighters who have slipped into the country and will monitor their activities, said Ibrahim al-Janabi, a senior member of the Iraqi Governing Council's security committee. The service will employ 500 to 2,000 people, he said, and is expected to be formed well before the Bush administration transfers sovereignty to an Iraqi government on June 30.

The Central Intelligence Agency is taking the lead in helping put together the new service, American officials said. The C.I.A. has close ties to the Iraqi National Accord, an opposition group founded by former Baath Party members who worked from London and Jordan to try to overthrow Mr. Hussein's government.

The head of the group, Iyad Alawi, heads the Governing Council's security committee and met in December with the director of central intelligence, George J. Tenet, at C.I.A. headquarters in Langley, Va., to discuss the new intelligence service, officials said. Mr. Janabi, also a senior official in the group, is a leading candidate to head the new service."

New Iraq Agency to Hunt Rebels January 31, 2004

Second, have some foreign Mercenaries (minus eight - six Blackwater mercenaries and *their* two Fiji bodygurads - and a Bulgarian hellicopter):**

According to Ahmad Al-Chalabi:

".. you know, each one of those 22,000 [mercenaries] makes $1,000 a day. This is $22 million a day, or

$7 billion a year *(By the way, their wages are being paid for with Iraqi money, my comment)*. Why is that necessary? They are not answerable to anyone and move around bearing weapons in a provocative manner.'

Q: Do you use any of them?

Not one. All my bodyguards are Iraqis."

Man of many colours April 20, 2005

Thirdly, for deserts have some local 'security' business:

For whom the 'dollar' tolls: Iraqi Disneyland for the American tourist and Iraqi mercenaries for the American army March 4, 2005

Bloody indigestion, eh?



** PS: A **video clip** (which is still availbale) has already surfaced of the Bulgarian hellicopter downing on April 21, 2005.

WARNING

Gruesome images,

as gruesome as that of the execution of the wounded old man leaning against a wall in the Fallujah mosque last November 2004.

- **Bush Nominates Terrorist for National Intelligence Director (10 April 2005)**

JOHN NEGROPONTE & THE DEATH-SQUAD CONNECTION

Bush Nominates Terrorist for National Intelligence Director

B*Russell*s Tribunal Dossier
Introduction to the "Salvador option" and Iraq's "Death squads" - *PART 5* -



by Frank Morales

"He will be a key figure in US counter-terror operations." —BBC News, Feb. 17, 2005

"I think he could have stopped all these assassinations and torture... We're against this nomination. If he didn't see human rights violations in Honduras, it's possible he won't see human rights violations anywhere in the world." —Leo Valladares Lanza, former head, Honduran Human Rights Commission, quoted in New York Times, March 29, 2005

On February 17, 2005, President George W. Bush nominated John Negroponte, 65, to be the United States' first National Intelligence Director." According to various published reports, Negroponte will be the president's "primary briefer" in the area of global and domestic intelligence and counter-terror operations, coordinating and overseeing the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA), National Security Agency (NSA), Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) and other agencies.

His upcoming Senate confirmation seems assured, and that is a scary prospect. Why? Because Negroponte has a long and bloody criminal history, dating back to the early 1960s, of overseeing the training and arming of death squads, schooled in the techniques of torture, "forced interrogation," assassination and, as we shall see, even genocide. He has been described as an "old-fashioned imperialist," active for nearly four decades in Vietnam, Central America, the Philippines, Mexico and most recently Iraq. He got his start back in the days of the CIA's Phoenix program, which assassinated some 40,000 Vietnamese "subversives."

According to Bush, the ultra-rightist Negroponte has a real grip on today's "global intelligence needs." Indeed he does. Negroponte's long career in the "foreign service" has equipped him well to fulfill the requirements of global and domestic counterinsurgency. So while newly-installed Attorney General Gonzales supplies the legal basis for torture (as he did as a Bush White House counsel), and recently-installed Homeland Security czar Michael Chertoff acquiesces (as he did as a Justice Department pointman on the post-9-11 sweeps), Negroponte is now in a position to ratchet up the repression domestically, and further the dissolution of democracy at home.

Although Negroponte's office will be in its own projected $200 million headquarters, Bush has said that Negroponte "will have access on a daily basis." Negroponte has actually had close presidential access for awhile. Not quite four years ago, on Sept. 18, 2001, as the embers were still smoking at Lower Manhattan's Ground Zero, Negroponte was appointed U.S. Representative to the United Nations. His mission was to work the floor and backrooms in preparation for Colin Powell's infamous February 2003 presentation to the UN making the case for war on Iraq--which even Powell now admits was based on falsehoods. Then in April 2004, with a counter-insurgency war in Iraq rapidly

spreading, Bush nominated Negroponte to be U.S. Ambassador to that occupied nation following the June 2004 hand-over of "sovereignty" to as-yet "undetermined Iraqi authorities."

RAP SHEET

Negroponte was born in London in 1939, the son of a Greek-American shipping magnate. A graduate of Yale University, raised on New York's Park Avenue, he was a "career diplomat" between 1960 and 1997, serving in eight countries in Asia, Europe and Latin America, as well as holding positions in the State Department and White House. From 1971 to 1973, Negroponte was the officer-in-charge for Vietnam at the National Security Council (NSC) under Henry Kissinger, having worked as a "political affairs officer" (read: CIA) at the US Embassy in Saigon starting as early as 1964. At that time, he shared a room with Richard Holbrooke, then an official for the Agency for International Development, later US ambassador to the UN under Clinton. Negroponte and Holbrooke both became members of the Council on Foreign Relations (CFR), the oldest and most prestigious of U.S. foreign policy think-tanks. Following Vietnam, Negroponte went on to "serve" for a number of years as an "economics officer" working out of the US Embassy in Ecuador.

Negroponte was appointed in 1981 by President Ronald Reagan to head up the U.S, Embassy in Honduras, where he stayed quite busy through 1985. From 1987-1989, he was deputy assistant to the president for national security affairs, reporting to Colin Powell. From 1989-1993, he was ambassador to Mexico. Following a stint as ambassador to the Philippines from 1993-1997, he "retired" from the diplomatic corps and took a well-paid position as vice president for global markets at McGraw-Hill, the big publishing company.

In 1981 President Reagan authorized paramilitary operations against the leftist government of Nicaragua. As ambassador to Honduras from 1981 to 1985, Negroponte played a key role in establishing that country as a base of operations for the CIA's "Contra" guerilla army then attempting to destabilize Nicaragua, with a 450-square-kilometer stretch along the border virtually turned over to the US-backed Nicaraguan rebels. He was also instrumental in the reign of terror then being overseen in Honduras by security chief Gen. Gustavo Alvarez Martinez, his good friend. Between 1980 and 1984, US military aid to Honduras jumped from $3.9 million to $77.4 million. Much of this went to facilitate the crushing of popular movements through a covert "low intensity" war.

Although the high-level planning, money and arms for this repression flowed from Washington, much of the on-the-ground logistics was run out of the Embassy in Tegucigalpa. So crammed was the tiny country with US military troops and bases at this time, that it was dubbed the "USS Honduras." The captain of this ship, Negroponte, was in charge of the US Embassy when--according to a 1995 four-part series in the Baltimore Sun--hundreds of Hondurans deemed "subversives" were kidnapped, raped,

tortured and killed by Battalion 316, a secret Honduran army intelligence unit trained and supported by the Pentagon and the Central Intelligence Agency.

BATTALION 316

In addition to internal repression in Honduras, Battalion 316 also participated in the CIA's covert war against Nicaragua. Members of the Battalion were conscripted by the CIA for such sensitive missions as training the Contra terrorists and even mining Nicaragua's harbors. Negroponte worked closely with Gen. Alvarez in overseeing the training Honduran soldiers in psychological warfare, sabotage, torture and kidnapping. Honduras was the second largest recipient of U.S. military aid in the hemisphere at this time after neighboring El Salvador. Increasing numbers of both Honduran and Salvadoran soldiers were sent to the U.S. Army's School of the Americas to receive training. In El Salvador, the death squads were headed up by Major Roberto D'Aubuisson, a 1972 graduate of the School of the Americas. General Luis Alonso Discua Elvir, one of his classmates at the US "torture academy," was a founder and commander of Battalion 316.

Through his support of Battalion 316, Negroponte is directly complicit in the murder of at least 184 Honduran civilians officially found to have been killed by the death squad by a 1994 Honduran truth commission. The unit used shock and suffocation devices in interrogations, kept prisoners naked--and, when no longer useful, killed them brutally, and buried them in unmarked clandestine graves. Women were raped, often in front of their families.

Negroponte was likely involved in a number of other like paramilitary formations throughout Central America, as compliant and "stable" Honduras served as a base for U.S. operations throughout the region. Recently, the New York Times (March 8, 2005) reported that the Organization of American States (OAS) has reopened an investigation, "based on new forensic evidence," into the massacre of "hundreds of peasants" at El Mozote, El Salvador in 1981--when 800 unarmed men, women and children were murdered by Salvadoran soldiers "from a battalion trained and equipped by the United States." Reports of the massacre were published at the time in the New York Times and the Washington Post--reports that were "dismissed" by Negroponte and other "officials of the Reagan administration."

Covert operations in Central America were paid for in part through the sale of cocaine. "CIA officials," according to the New York Times (July 17, 1998), "involved in the Contra program gave relatively low priority to collecting information about the possible drug involvement of Contra rebels"--while of course giving high priority to covering it all up. Ambassador Negroponte acquiesced in shutting down the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) office in Tegucigalpa, just as Honduras was emerging as an important base for CIA-facilitated cocaine trans-shipments to the United States, with profits going

to the Contras. According to a 1989 Senate Foreign Relations Committee investigative report, "elements of the Honduran military were involved in the protection of the drug traffickers."

In 1982, the US negotiated access to airfields in Honduras and established a regional military training centers there for Central American forces, principally directed at improving the lethal effectiveness of the Salvadoran military--at a time when the Salvadoran army was carrying out massacres such as the one at El Mozote, and army-linked death squads ratcheted up a death toll of at least 800, according to El Salvador's UN-backed Truth Commission. Much of the training in these "anti-subversive" techniques--i.e., kidnapping, torture and murder--was done at El Aguacate air base in eastern Honduras. Established in 1984, the base was also used as a secret detention and torture center. In August 2001, excavations at the base uncovered 185 corpses, including those of two U.S. citizens--church workers involved in aiding the Honduran peasant movement--thought to have been killed and buried at the site.

In 1994, when the Honduran Human Rights Commission documented the torture and disappearance of at least 184 political opponents in the previous decade, it specifically accused John Negroponte of complicity in a number of human rights violations. The Baltimore Sun reporters found that in 1982 alone, during Negroponte's first full year as ambassador, the Honduran press carried at least 318 stories of extra-judicial attacks by the military. The US Embassy, however, certified the country's record on human rights in such glowing terms that aides to Negroponte joked that they were writing about Norway, not Honduras. Rick Chidester, a former aide to Negroponte, revealed to the Sun that his supervisors had ordered him to remove allegations of torture and executions from his draft of the 1982 human rights report.

Jack Binns, who served under president Jimmy Carter as the ambassador to Honduras prior to Negroponte, made numerous complaints about human rights abuses by the Honduran military. Recently, he stated regarding Negroponte, "I think he was complicit in abuses, I think he tried to put a lid on reporting abuses and I think he was untruthful to Congress about those activities." (NYT, March 29, 2005) In one early '80s cable, Binns reported that Gen. Alvarez was modeling his campaign against suspected subversives, on Argentina's "dirty war" of the 1970s, which, in turn, had been modeled on the techniques of European fascism in the 1930s and 40s--perhaps after having received some pointers from certain elements who fled there with US support after World War II. Recall that Adolf Eichmann, overseer of the apparatus of Jewish extermination during the Nazi era, was captured in Bueno Aires in 1960.

In May 1982, Sister Laetitia Bordes, a nun who had worked for ten years in El Salvador, went on a fact-finding delegation to Honduras to investigate the whereabouts of thirty Salvadoran nuns and women of faith who fled to Honduras in 1981 after the death-squad assassination of El Salvador's Archbishop Oscar Romero the previous year. Negroponte claimed that the Embassy knew nothing. But in a 1996

interview with the Baltimore Sun, Jack Binns said that a group of Salvadorans--including the women Bordes had been looking for--were abducted on April 22, 1981, and savagely tortured by the DNI, the Honduran secret police. They were later thrown out of helicopters while still alive. The Sun's investigation found that the CIA and US embassy knew of these crimes, but continued to support Battalion 3-16 and ensure that the Embassy's annual human rights report did not contain the full story. According to a 1996 BBC report, Negroponte "knew about the CIA-trained Honduran army unit that tortured and killed alleged subversives." According to the Baltimore Sun report, Negroponte "was ambassador when the worst of the abuses were taking place. He knew everything that was going on."

NEGROPONTE'S REVISIONISM

When Bush announced Negroponte's nomination as ambassador to the UN shortly after coming to office, the move was met with widespread protest. Questioned at the time about whether he had turned a blind eye to human rights abuses in Honduras, Negroponte rejected the suggestion. "I do not believe then [sic], nor do I believe now, that these abuses were part of a deliberate government policy. To this day, I do not believe that death squads were operating in Honduras."

Despite the protests, the Bush administration did not back down--and even went so far as to silence potential witnesses who might have shed some light on Negroponte's criminal history. On March 25, 2001, the Los Angeles Times reported on the sudden deportation from the United States of several former Honduran death squad members who could have provided damaging testimony against Negroponte in his then upcoming Senate confirmation hearings. One of the deported Hondurans was none other than Gen. Luis Alonso Discua, the former commander of Battalion 3-16, then serving as Honduras' deputy ambassador to the UN!

Upon learning of Negroponte's 2001 UN nomination, Reed Brody of Human Rights Watch commented that "he looked the other way when serious atrocities were committed" and that "one would have to wonder what kind of message the Bush administration is sending about human rights by this appointment." Answer: What human rights? When queried about these "serious atrocities," Negroponte told CNN, "to the contrary, I think we bent over backwards to press for elections and for democratic reform.... Frankly, I think that some of the retrospective efforts to try and suggest that we were supportive of or condoned the actions of human rights violators is really revisionistic."

In 1987, during the administration of George HW Bush, Negroponte returned to the National Security Council (NSC) to work under Colin Powell as deputy assistant to the president for national security affairs. Within two years, he was back in Latin America; appointed as ambassador to Mexico, where he served from July 1989 to September 1993. There, he officiated at the block-long, fortified embassy and helped facilitate Mexico's passage of the NAFTA treaty--as well as likely U.S. intelligence operations

that anticipated a popular reaction to the treaty. Negroponte left Mexico just ahead of the Zapatista uprising in Chiapas.

APPOINTMENT TO THE UNITED NATIONS

Negroponte was sworn in as U.S. Representative to the United Nations on Sept. 18, 2001. By November 2002, he was strong-arming a resolution through the UN Security Council which called for the "disarming" of Iraq. Standing in front of the Security Council with CIA director George Tenet, Negroponte stated that "the Resolution makes clear that any Iraqi failure to comply is unacceptable and that Iraq must be disarmed. One way or another...Iraq will be disarmed." The New York Times would later report (March 29, 2005) that "Mr. Negroponte pressed on foreign colleagues American intelligence on Iraqi weapons that turned out to be profoundly flawed. If he was miffed, Mr. Negroponte never spoke out."

Negroponte also delivered a warning to other less hawkish members of the Security Council, stating that, "if the Security Council fails to act decisively in the event of a further Iraqi violation, this resolution does not constrain any member state from acting to defend itself against the threat posed by Iraq, or to enforce relevant UN resolutions and protect world peace and security." As Stephen Kinzer, writing in the New York Review of Books (September 2001), put it, "giving him this job is a way of telling the UN: 'We hate you'."

When faced with contention over US intentions during the UN debate leading up to the war in Iraq, Negroponte turned to grandstanding. In March 2003, Negroponte walked out of the General Assembly after Iraq's UN envoy, Mohammed Al-Douri, accused the U.S. of preparing a war of aggression. "Britain and the United States are about to start a real war of extermination" he said, "that will kill everything and destroy everything."

NEGROPONTE IN BAGHDAD

On April 20, 2004, Bush nominated Negroponte as ambassador to Iraq, stating that, "he has done a really good job of speaking for the United States to the world about our intentions to spread freedom and peace." Calling him "a man of enormous experience and skill" was all that our courageous Senators required in order to vote him in by 95-3 on May 6. He was sworn in on June 23.

Negroponte's US Embassy in Baghdad, housed in a palace that once belonged to Saddam Hussein, was and remains the largest embassy in the world, with a "diplomatic staff" of over 3,000. Opting for the kind of diplomacy he's most familiar with, he immediately "shifted more than a $1 billion to build up the Iraqi Army," diverting the funds "from reconstruction projects" to military and intelligence projects associated with "what intelligence officials describe as the largest C.I.A. station in the world." (NYT , March 29, 2005)

On Jan. 2, 2004, the Washington Post stated that a "major challenge" facing the diplomatic mission "will be sorting out the terms of the US military presence, which is expected to exceed 100,000 troops even after the occupation ends..." An un-named U.S. "official" stated that "we have to determine what command American troops will be under: Will it be part of some kind of multinational force, under the United Nations, under NATO? Or will they be relatively independent in an agreement with the Iraqi government? These are huge questions to be answered in a very short amount of time." We can rest assured that John Negroponte, the enforcer, made the Iraqi government an offer they couldn't refuse in favor of the "relatively independent" option.

Shortly after taking up the position, Negroponte was asked about eyewitness statements that in late June 2004, Iraq's interim prime minister, Ayad Allawi had, in a gesture of steadfast loyalty, personally executed up to six suspected insurgents in front of his US military bodyguards. While Allawi denies the accusation, Negroponte did not. In an e-mail to the Sydney Morning Herald, July 2004, he stated that "if we attempted to refute each [rumor], we would have no time for other business. As far as this embassy's press office is concerned, this case is closed."

Sydney Morning Herald columnist Alan Ramsey wrote of Negroponte's arrogant side-stepping. "Of course. One only has to consider Negroponte's record as US ambassador in Honduras to know he is a loyal servant of Republican Washington who sees and knows nothing... This same man, with an embassy regime of more than 1,000 American foreign service officers, plus American advisers salted throughout Iraqi ministries, as well as 140,000 US military personnel, now has absolute covert power in Iraq. Of course, 'the case is closed'."

By the first weeks of January 2005, Negroponte was said to be overseeing the formation of death squads in Iraq, prompting media reports about a "Salvador option." MSNBC reported on Jan. 8, 2005 that the Pentagon was "intensively debating an option that dates back to a still-secret strategy in the Reagan administration's battle against the leftist guerrilla insurgency in El Salvador in the early 1980s. Then, faced with a losing war against Salvadoran rebels, the US government funded or supported 'nationalist' forces that allegedly included so-called death squads directed to hunt down and kill rebel leaders and sympathizers. Eventually, the insurgency was quelled, and many U.S. conservatives consider the policy to have been a success, despite the deaths of innocent civilians..."

One Pentagon proposal would send Special Forces teams to advise, support and possibly train Iraqi death squads, most likely hand-picked Kurdish Peshmerga fighters and Shiite militiamen, to target Sunni insurgents and their sympathizers--even across the border into Syria, carrying out assassinations or so-called "snatch" operations, in which the targets are sent to secret facilities for interrogation.

Major General Muhammad Abdallah al-Shahwani, director of Iraq's National Intelligence Service, was quoted in a Jan. 8, 2005 Newsweek story on the "Salvador Option," warning that the U.S. occupation has failed to crack the problem of broad support for the insurgency. The insurgents, he said, "are mostly in the Sunni areas where the population there, almost 200,000, is sympathetic to them." He said most Iraqis do not actively support the insurgents or provide them with material or logistical help, but at the same time they won't turn them in. One military source suggested that "new offensive operations" are needed that would create a fear of aiding the insurgency. "The Sunni population is paying no price for the support it is giving to the terrorists," he said. "From their point of view, it is cost-free. We have to change that equation."

Threatening everyone in a village with torture and death, if the village is deemed a potential base insurgent operations can be a very effective technique, whether the perpetrators are the Nazi SS in occupied Czechoslovakia, the death squads in El Salvador, or whatever new force is invented in Iraq. This strategy of tactical terror aims to sever an insurgency from it's potential base of support.

At least one pro-occupation death squad is already in operation. On Jan. 11, 2004, just days after the Pentagon plans regarding possible "new offensive operations" were revealed, a new militant group, "Saraya Iraqna," began offering big wads of American cash for insurgent scalps--up to $50,000, the Iraqi paper Al Ittihad reported. "Our activity will not be selective," the group promised.

CIA COUNTERINSURGENCY: PROJECT X

During Negroponte's Honduran ambassadorship, he worked closely with Duane R. Clarridge, aka "Mr. Marone", a high-ranking CIA officer based in Honduras, who was, according to a recent New York Times report (March 29, 2005), "running the covert war against communism in Central America." According to Clarridge, "Negroponte was a big supporter of the agency's covert action mission" there.

At the time, the CIA utilized it's "Human Resource Exploitation Training Manual" to teach young Honduran soldiers and others the methodology of torture. Dated 1983, the manual, one in a series of recently "declassified" documents, addresses, among other subjects, "coercive interrogation" techniques utilized in "the torture situation," which is, according to the manual, "a contest between the subject and his tormentor."

The manual discusses inflicting pain or threatening pain, depriving prisoners of food and sleep, making them maintain rigid positions for long periods, stripping them naked, and keeping them blindfolded or in prolonged solitary confinement. Disseminated throughout Latin America during the early 1980s, the manual appears to have been compiled from training courses given to members of the Honduran military. The manual can be assumed to have been sanctioned by higher-ups, including

Negroponte, given, for example, its statement that, "illegal detention always requires prior [headquarters] approval."

This secret manual was compiled from sections of an earlier 1963 training manual entitled, "KUBARK Counterintelligence Interrogation." This was a U.S. Military Intelligence field manual written as part of the Army's Foreign Intelligence Assistance Program. According to the manual, "all coercive techniques of interrogation are designed to induce regression" to a state of abject submission. The tormentor's "principal coercive techniques" are "arrest, detention, deprivation of sensory stimuli through solitary confinement or similar methods, threats and fear, debility, pain, heightened suggestibility, hypnosis, narcosis, and induced regression."

In a March 1992 internal "report of investigation," which was sent to then-Secretary of Defense Richard Cheney, seven such interrogation manuals used for years by the Pentagon's Southern Command throughout Latin America were said to contain "objectionable" and "prohibited material." Army investigators traced the origins of the instructions on use of beatings, false imprisonment, executions and truth serums back to a top-secret program run by the Army Foreign Intelligence unit in the 1960s code-named "Project X." Written by US Army counterinsurgency experts starting in 1965, the Joint Foreign Intelligence Assistance Program used Project X to train U.S. allies in Vietnam, Iran, Latin America, and elsewhere around the world.

The report to Cheney noted that the "offensive and objectionable material" in the Project X manuals "undermines US credibility, and could result in significant embarrassment." Cheney of course, immediately embarked on a course of "corrective action," namely, to "recall" and destroy as many of the manuals as possible, shredding the "embarrassing" history--though some copies have survived, or perhaps were meant to.

Meanwhile, a July 1991 U.S. Southern Command "confidential" document records a phone conversation with a Captain Victor Tise, who served in 1982 as a counterinsurgency instructor at the School of the Americas (SOA). In it, Tise relates the history of the "objectionable material" in the manuals and the training courses that he assembled for use at the School. According to Tise, in 1976, following a decade of SOA tutoring, use of the Project X material was suspended by Congress and the Carter administration "for fear the training would contribute to Human Rights violations in other countries." But the program was restored by the Reagan administration in 1982, shortly after Negroponte arrived in Honduras.

Tise described Project X as a "training package to provide counterinsurgency techniques learned in Vietnam to Latin American countries." These "techniques" were undoubtedly derived from the Phoenix Program, the CIA's assassination campaign which liquidated 40,000 Vietnamese "subversives." The course materials Tise put together, including the manuals that became the subject

of the investigations, were sent to Defense Department headquarters "for clearance" in 1982. They "came back approved" and "UNCHANGED," despite the fact that Tise sought to remove--or so he said--the "objectionable" parts. Subsequently, hundreds of the unaltered manuals, "objectionable material" and all, were disseminated for use throughout US-militarized Latin America over the next nine years. Negroponte's role in this particular bit of "objectionable" history remains shrouded, and shredded.

It appears that by 1965, the US intelligence community had seen fit to formalize the hard-learned lessons of the Phoenix Program in Vietnam by commissioning the top-secret Project X. Based at the U.S. Army Intelligence Center & School at Fort Holabird, Maryland, the project drew from "field experience" to "provide intelligence training to friendly foreign countries," according to a Pentagon history prepared in 1991 and released in 1997. According to the Washington Post (March 6, 1997), the Project X materials even suggested that "militaries infiltrate and suppress even democratic political dissident movements and hunt down opponents in every segment of society in the name of fighting Communism..."

In the early 1970s, the U.S. Army Intelligence Center moved to Fort Huachuca in Arizona and began exporting Project X material to foreign U.S. "military assistance groups." By the mid-1970s, the Project X material was going to armies all over the world, in effect, a textbook for global counterinsurgency and terror warfare.

In its 1992 review, the Pentagon also acknowledged that Project X was the source for some of the "objectionable" lessons taught at the School of the Americas where Latin American officers were trained in blackmail, kidnapping, murder and spying on non-violent political opponents. But disclosure of the full story was blocked when Defense Secretary Cheney ordered the destruction of most Project X records. Nearly simultaneously, President George HW Bush pardoned six Reagan-Bush administration figures of any wrongdoing in the Nicaragua operations. These included former Defense Secretary Caspar Weinberger, and Duane Clarridge, by then named as intellectual author of another sinister murder manual, "Psychological Operations in Guerilla Warfare." Produced by the CIA, this booklet openly instructed in the assassination of public officials, and was distributed to the Nicaraguan Contras.

That George W Bush's war on terrorism is really a global war of terror directed against the entire world becomes inescapably clear with the appointment of a man linked to this grisly history to head the entire U.S. intelligence apparatus. Perhaps there is still time to apply pressure on the Senate and halt this next step in the legitimization of torture and state terrorism--if the citizenry, human rights community, clergy and responsible voices in the media can join in a single cry: STOP NEGROPONTE!

DEDICATED TO ARCHBISHOP OSCAR ROMERO, BORN 1917, ASSASSINATED MARCH 25, 1980.

Adopted from an article in The Shadow, New York City, Spring 2005

http://www.shadow.autono.net/

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- **American Terror (21 Jan 2005)**

By Chris Floyd

01/21/05 "Moscow Times" -- More than two years ago, we wrote here of a secret Pentagon plan to

foment terrorism by sending covert agents to infiltrate terrorist groups and goad them into action -- in other words, committing acts of murder and destruction. The purpose was two-fold: first, to bring the terrorist groups into the open, where they could be counterattacked; and second, to justify U.S. military attacks on the countries where the terrorists were operating -- attacks which, in the Pentagon's words, would put those nations' "sovereignty at risk." It was a plan that countenanced -- indeed, encouraged -- the deliberate murder of innocent people and the imposition of U.S. military rule anywhere in the world that U.S. leaders desired.

This plan is now being activated.

In fact, it's being expanded, as The New Yorker's Seymour Hersh revealed last week. Not only will U.S.-directed agents infiltrate existing terrorist groups and provoke them into action, but the Pentagon itself will create its own terrorist groups and "death squads." After establishing their terrorist "credentials" through various atrocities and crimes, these American-run groups will then be able to ally with -- and ultimately undermine -- existing terrorist groups.

Top-level officials in the Pentagon, the U.S. intelligence services and the Bush administration confirmed to Hersh that the plan is going forward, under the direction of Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld -- just as we noted here in November 2002. Through a series of secret executive orders, George W. Bush has given Rumsfeld the authority to turn the entire world into "a global free-fire zone," a top Pentagon adviser says. These secret operations will be carried out with virtually no oversight; in many cases, even the top military commanders in the affected regions will not be told about them. The American people, of course, will never know what's being done in their name.

The covert units -- including the Pentagon-funded terrorist groups and hit squads -- will be operating outside all constraints of law and morality. "We're going to be riding with the bad boys," one insider told Hersh. Another likened it to the palmy days of the Reagan-Bush years: "Do you remember the right-wing execution squads in El Salvador? We founded them and we financed them. The objective now is to recruit locals in any area we want. And we aren't going to tell Congress about it." Indeed, we reported here last summer that Bush has already budgeted $500 million to fund local paramilitaries and guerrilla groups in the most volatile areas of the world, a measure guaranteed to produce needless bloodshed, destruction and suffering for innocent people already ravaged by conflict.

The activation of the Pentagon terrorist operation is part of Bush's second-term expansion of the "war on terror." Despite some obfuscating rhetoric about "diplomacy," the Bush regime is pressing ahead with a hard-line strategy aimed at opening new military fronts in the "global free-fire zone." Any dissenting voices within the government are being ruthlessly purged. The Pentagon's secret forces are set for operations in at least 10 countries, and Bush insiders "repeatedly" told Hersh that "Iran is the

next strategic target."

Iran has long been a focus of the small clique of "global dominationists" -- led by Rumsfeld, Paul Wolfowitz, Dick Cheney and their acolytes -- who engineered the invasion of Iraq. This group is determined to "whack Iran," as one insider put it, and they're not at all discouraged by the debacle in Iraq; indeed, to them it's a rousing success. Their first objective -- openly stated years ago, before Bush took office -- was the overthrow of Saddam Hussein's regime and the planting of a U.S. "military footprint" in Iraq. This has now been done. The fact that it has plunged the Iraqi people into a hell of violence, chaos, terror and extremism is of no real concern to the clique. Their lofty rhetoric about "freedom" and "liberation" is meaningless sham, shuck and jive for the rubes. By the admission of the clique's own publications, they seek strategic control over the world's energy resources in order to preserve and expand American geopolitical and economic hegemony in the new century. Everything else -- including the security of the American people, put at increasing risk by the clique's reckless policies -- is of secondary importance.

U.S. forces are already conducting military reconnaissance inside Iran in preparation for strikes on alleged nuclear weapons facilities, Hersh reports. The Pentagon is feverishly updating war plans for a "maximum ground and air invasion of Iran," incorporating the new staging areas now available in Iraq, Afghanistan and Pakistan, while employing an Iranian terrorist group, MEK, to launch covert ops and terrorist acts against Tehran. MEK was once given sanctuary by Hussein, who used the group as a brutal enforcer against Kurd and Shiite insurgents. Now Bush, "riding with the bad boys," has embraced the MEK murderers as his own.

In their ignorance and arrogance, the Bushists will almost certainly strike at Iran -- despite the fact that even Iranian dissidents support the effort to make their nation a nuclear power and would join the mullahs in retaliation. The result will be a conflict far surpassing the horror and magnitude of the Iraq disaster.

In our original report on the Pentagon's terror scheme, we wrote: "Bush and his cohorts are plunging the world into an abyss, an endless night of murder and terror -- wholesale, retail, state-sponsored, privatized; of fear and degradation, servility, chaos, and the perversion of all that's best in us." Now the night has come. Now the United States stands openly -- even proudly -- for terrorism, torture and the Hitlerian principle of aggressive war. America has fallen into the pit -- and the hopes of the world go with it.

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- **I Am Become Death - The Destroyer Of The Worlds: (30 Nov 2004)**

The crimson waters of the Euphrates are now emptying into the Persian Gulf the hopes and aspirations of innocent people whose lives were snuffed out on the orders of a man rewarded for his monumental crimes by his great nation.

Anwaar Hussain

11/30/04 "ICH" -- Known as the "city of mosques" for its more than 200 mosques, Fallujah is also known for refusing to add Saddam's name to the call for prayers from its ancient minarets. It is located on the banks of river Euphrates, the largest river in Southwest Asia. The 1700 miles long Euphrates is linked with some of the most important events in olden history.

The city of Ur, found at its mouth, was the birthplace of Abraham. On its banks stood the city of Babylon. In the past, the army of Necho was defeated on its banks by Nebuchadnezzar. Cyrus the Younger and Crassus perished after crossing it. Alexander traversed it and continued his journey eastward. Presently, George Bush's forces are crossing and re-crossing it making its waters redder each time with the blood of Fallujah's citizens.

Fallujah has been laid waste. It has been bombed, re-bombed, its citizens gunned down, its structures devastated by powerful weapons. It is a hell on earth of crushed bodies, shattered buildings and the reek of death. In addition to the artillery and the warplanes dropping 500, 1000, and 2000-pound bombs, 70-ton Abrams Tanks and the murderous AC-130 Spectre gunship that can demolish a whole city block in less than a minute, the Marines had snipers crisscrossing the entire town firing at will at whatever moved outside the buildings. For those inside, the US troops were equipped with thermal sights capable of detecting body heat. Any such detection was eagerly assumed to indicate the presence

of “insurgents” inviting a deadly salvo.

No body has an accurate idea of how many Iraqis—combatants and noncombatants—have been killed by the thousands of tons of explosives and bullets let loose upon the city. Mortuary teams collecting the dead rotting in the city streets are fighting the wandering dogs that are busy devouring their former masters. The hundreds buried beneath the rubble and debris will be dug out later. A US marine spokesman, Colonel Mike Regner, estimated 1,000 and 2,000 Iraqis dead. The world is awaiting the toll from more reliable sources with a wincing anticipation.

Eyewitnesses report human corpses littering the city’s streets, nibbled at by starving canines. Parents have been forced to watch their wounded children die and then bury their bodies in their gardens. An Iraqi journalist, reporting in the city for the BBC and Reuters, said: “I have seen some strange things recently, such as stray dogs snatching bites out of bodies lying on the streets. Meanwhile, people forage in their gardens looking for something to eat. Those that have survived this far are looking gaunt. The opposite is happening to the dead—left where they fell, they are now bloated and rotting...”

Some images that did manage to filter through the layers of American censorship include scenes of the devastated landscape of the city; the bloodied and fly-covered corpses of young Iraqi men lying in the streets or heaped in rows amidst the debris; a headless body; women and children escaping with the few possessions they have left; mortuary teams collecting the dead; and Fallujah infants being treated for horrific injuries in Baghdad hospitals. US general John Sattler declared: “We have liberated the city of Fallujah.”

The assault on Fallujah is a pure and simple Nazi-style collective punishment, not liberation. The city has been razed to the ground because its political, spiritual and tribal leaders, motivated by Iraqi patriotism and opposition to the presence of foreign troops in their country, organized a guerilla resistance to the US invasion.

The aim of the US assault is to make Fallujah a model to the rest of Iraq of what will happen to those thinking on similar lines. It is the leading thrust of an orgy of killing intended to crush and drive underground every voice of dissent and ensure that elections this coming January will throw up a weak-willed, pro-US toady regime. The American military is rumored to be planning similar attacks on scores of other Iraqi cities and towns.

Not a single major voice has been raised in the American media against the ongoing destruction of Fallujah. While much of the world recognizes something dreadful has occurred, the US press does not even bat an eyelash over the organized leveling of a city of 300,000 people. In none of the US media commentaries is there a single phrase of unease about the moral, or legal, questions involved in the

attack on Fallujah. None have dared say it in as many words that the American military operation in the city is an unlawful act of aggression in an equally illegal, criminal, aggressive war.

The opposite is true in fact. Ralph Peters, the author of "Beyond Baghdad: Postmodern War and Peace." a rabid Neocon mouthpiece and revered by the ruling Neocons, in his prominently placed November 4 New York Post article wrote: “We need to demonstrate that the US military cannot be deterred or defeated. If that means widespread destruction, we must accept the price. Most of Fallujah’s residents—those who wish to live in peace—have already fled. Those who remain have made their choice. We need to pursue the terrorists remorselessly...

“That means killing. While we strive to obey the internationally recognized laws of war (though our enemies do not), our goal should be to target the terrorists and insurgents so forcefully that few survive to raise their hands in surrender. We don’t need more complaints about our treatment of prisoners from the global forces of appeasement. We need terrorists dead in the dust. And the world needs to see their corpses...

“Even if Fallujah has to go the way of Carthage, reduced to shards, the price will be worth it. We need to demonstrate our strength of will to the world, to show that there is only one possible result when madmen take on America.”

Though the carnage carried out by Hitler’s regime was on a different scale than that now being committed by the Bush administration, there are striking parallels. For the first time since the Wehrmacht swept through Europe, the world is witnessing a major imperialist power launching an unjustifiable war, placing an entire people under military occupation and carrying out acts of collective and visible punishment against civilian populace. The US media’s wretched connivance in this deception is incredible, as incredible as the fact that this war, based on undeniable lies as it was, was sold to the American people as the gospel truth ordained by God.

To be honest, George Bush is not the first US president ordering the state’s machinery to pulverize nations and peoples abroad. Even a hurried analysis of the American’s government’s conduct in the last century makes for a most damning indictment. Out of the US’s past foreign policy woodwork, crawl out numerous invasions, bombings, overthrowing governments, suppressing movements for social change, assassinating political leaders, perverting elections, manipulating labor unions, manufacturing "news", selling blatant lies, death squads, torture, biological warfare, depleted uranium, drug trafficking, mercenaries ... you name it.

This terrorizing of nations and individuals by various US governments has been going on full bore since at least the late 1890s, when Americans obliterated a million Filipinos to keep them safe from the

Spanish. 60 million Native Americans, the children of a lesser God, were exterminated by the orders of earlier administrations throughout the 19th century. The difference with past is that George Bush does it in the name of his God, a God far superior to any other and sanctioned fully by his coterie. Ironically, both George Bush and his nemesis, Osama Bin Laden, refer to God almost equal number of times in their public pronouncements.

The United States went into Afghanistan to kill or capture Osama Bin Laden. They killed 10,000 innocent Afghans but could not find their man. They went into Iraq to discover and eliminate Saddam's WMDs. They killed tens of thousands of Iraqis but found no WMD. They laid siege to the city of Fallujah to kill or capture Abu Musab Al-Zarqawi. The city and its inhabitants have been blown to smithereens but there is no Zarqawi. Is it not only too convenient? Next when they want to attack Pakistan, or Iran, they simply have to say that Bin Laden is taking refuge there. Just like the next Iraqi city awaiting the fate of Fallujah will be the latest refuge of Zarqawi; the WMDs too could next fly to Syria or may be even Saudi Arabia. Is one imagining things here? Or is it that the US imperialism is indeed now riding full time on the back of gargantuan lies?

After granting George Bush a carte blanche to do what he likes the American citizens, of course, continue their daily lives oblivious to what is being done in their name. Between their work places and the nearest fast food joints, they just do not have enough time to check back on the activities of the man who is playing the Terminator in the name of God and in their name.

Those who do get to know a little are in a constant state of denial. One thing is sure though. Just like in post-war Germany where some even denied the holocaust. "We didn't know what was happening" is bound to become a cliché that will one day be used to ridicule Americans who claim ignorance of the atrocities committed by their administration in their name. Ironically, Khomeini died trying to get people to see America as "the great Satan," It took George W. Bush and his cohorts just four years to do exactly that, and not just in the eyes of the Muslim world.

As America sinks deeper into the heart of darkness, its thinking citizens need to jolt themselves out of their apathy. With each passing day their beloved America is scaling ever greater heights of hideous glories. The man in charge, George W. Bush, is actually living the throes of his apocalyptic dream of "I am become death-the destroyer of the worlds". He codenamed his destruction of Fallujah as "Operation Phantom Fury". But as the falsehood dies and gives way to truth, as all lies must one day, it will be the Iraqi dead that will form a legion of phantoms and would throng around Americans in a macabre dance to haunt them for decades. The fury of those phantoms will be hair raising.

Fallujah will enter history as the place where US imperialism carried out an offense of heinous proportions this November, a monstrous crime far beyond any possible forgiveness. The crimson

waters of the Euphrates are now emptying into the Persian Gulf the hopes and aspirations of innocent people whose lives were snuffed out on the orders of a man rewarded for his monumental crimes by his great nation.

The Euphrates flows on.

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